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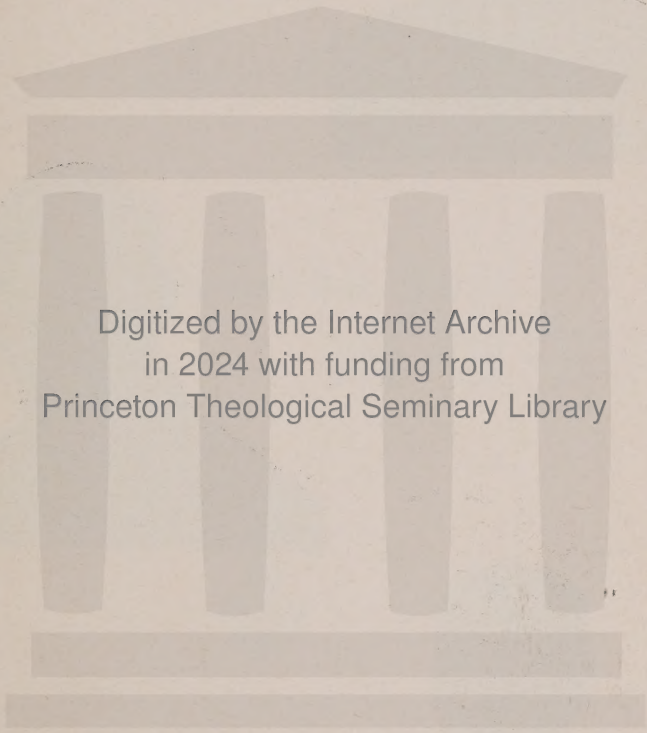
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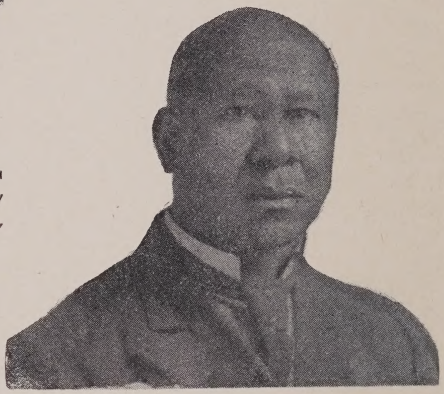
The Reverend David Richard Morant, "The People's Preacher," who died while fighting for God and His Christ.



Professor Asbury Benjamin Morant, a mighty man for God and humanity in the fields of industry, economics, and religion.

John J. Morant, B.D., D.D., minister, author, scholar, builder, and dean of religion at J. P. Campbell College, Jackson, Mississippi.

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Jno. J. Morant, B.D., D.D.

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To the

THREE BROTHERS

Mississippi

Minister

PART I

(MEMORIES OF FIFTY YEARS)

My Family Tree

My great-grandfather was an African of the Zulu tribe. He was captured by Dutch slavers and sold in the West Indies. He was never a slave, however. He was the father of two sons, Richard and Charles. My grandfather, Richard, was nicknamed "Hard Time." His brother, Charles Morant, was the grandfather of the late Reverend J. S. Morant, a prominent minister of the South Carolina Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The Reverend McCant Stewart was kinsman of the Morants.

My grandfather married a slave woman, Patsey, who was brought from Virginia to Alabama, near Selma. There my father and mother were born, just before the dawn of freedom. Unto them were born, after freedom, Richard, Anthony, and myself.

How the Morants Became Mississippians

In the late 1870's, many people who lived in Alabama were prevailed upon to migrate to Mississippi. My father and many of his kinsmen were impressed by the migration agents, who circulated fantastic stories about the richness of the Mississippi Delta. It was said that cotton grew so tall that one could pick it from the back of a horse, while riding, and that money could be gathered from the trees. Thus we went, but my father was soon disillusioned. While the land

was fertile, the money went into the coffers of the white sharecroppers. At Fort Lorn, near Greenwood, Mississippi, we had our first experience of semicivilization.

My Mother's Background

The Reverend Anthony Gant was born near Cahaba, Alabama. He was a slave, but he was very resourceful. He learned the baker's trade and what was then called hoopery —the craft of making water buckets, churns, and tubs out of cedar wood and girding them with brass hoops. Thus he succeeded in buying his freedom with the money he earned at hoopery in the daytime and baking at night.

He became a pioneer preacher in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and joined the Conference at Selma, Alabama, at which Bishop D. A. Payne presided.

Like my grandfather Morant, he would not take the name of Hunter, his slave owner, but remained a Gant. He was contemporary with Father Stubbs, and the Reverends M. E. Bryant, Lazarus Gardner, W. H. Mison, Mims, and Goodlo.

My mother, Fannie, was the youngest of his three daughters. He had three sons, John, Elsie, and Charles. Both of my grandfathers died in Alabama.

Our Early Career in Mississippi

My father had an elementary education and wanted at least that for his sons. Finding no school system near Greenwood, where my youngest brother, Asbury, was born, he stole away from Fort Lorn by steamboat to P. Line Home, south of Yazoo City, and there, under the instruction of Professors John N. Grandberry, A. H. Stephens, William Holland, and M. F. Gant, my three brothers and I had our first schooling, in a little log cabin by the Yazoo River.

A Thrilling Story About My Grandfather Inspired Us

It was said of "Hard Time" that he was made a slave driver on the Hunter slave plantation, but he would not whip slave women, and when the overseer demanded that he whip them he refused. Then, at the command of the overseer, the slaves attempted to whip him. But being a giant both in size and strength, he overpowered them all and broke the neck of the overseer with a stick. The master, after hearing the facts in the case, exonerated my grandfather, and thereafter he was a free man. This story has meant much to his grandsons Richard, Anthony, Asbury and myself.

My Father's Courage Called Foolhardiness, but It Worked

The sharecroppers ruled that boys between eight and ten could attend school only two months of the four-month term, because they were needed for work in the fields. The boys in this age group, were put to work in groups of from fifty to one hundred, on account of the team shortage. My father, however, refused to accept this ruling, and I, at the age of eight, witnessed my father withstand both the overseer and the owner of the plantation with his only weapon, a double-bladed, seven-pound ax, which he swung at shoulder height. He would have been shot down if his enemies had been as brave as he was, but they were not. The gunmen's nerves gave way at the thought that they might miss the mark, but an ax in my father's hands would not! Hence peace was declared, and we four Morants were given four months of schooling, while the others bowed to the demand of the landlords. My father had never owned a gun of any kind, and we thought it foolish on his part to invite what seemed to be certain death, but in later years we learned that courage, when one is right, is might. Thus all the Morants were given an opportunity to get all the educational training available, while many who submitted died like beasts of the field.

A Lost Opportunity at Yazoo City Public School

The evident interest I took in education during my first five winters prompted my father to enter me at Yazoo City Public School. I registered there with Professor A. J. Oakes, but soon conflict between the two races developed and I had to be taken back to P. Line Home, on schedule time. All I remember is that Brother W. H. Foote and others lost their lives. My Father told me about Willie Foote as we were on our way to Vicksburg, after the sad happening at Yazoo City. I was greatly impressed by the story of this good man's death and the reason for it.

It was then that I discovered the race consciousness of my father, which we all emulated. The daughter of Brother Foote, Mrs. L. J. Brown, now lives at Vicksburg.

Hostile Feeling Prevents the Masonic Funeral of Brother Foote

Dr. Thomas W. Stringer, the Grand Master of the M. W. Stringer Grand Lodge, who had assembled the Blue Lodge of A.F.A. Masons to give Brother Foote Masonic burial honors, was informed in a friendly manner by the mayor that it would not be wise to hold a public service. Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, who was holding the Mississippi Annual Conference in Bethel A.M.E. Church, predicted that the vengeance of God would someday exact a toll from the place where Brother Foote was assassinated. He said the mills of God grind slowly but they grind exceeding fine. Time has borne out the bishop's prediction.

Dr. Stringer was almost mobbed at Grenada, Mississippi, during the hot Republican campaign of 1878, when he attempted to hold a Republican mass meeting. He was rushed out of the little city, but before he left, he asserted that the wrath of God would soon be felt in Grenada. I have been told that, a little while after, yellow fever played havoc with the white people of that place. But now, I believe, it is one

of the best cities in Mississippi, and the feeling between the two races is good. This is evidence that weeping and injustice may endure a night, but joy will come in the morning.

Comments on Personal Freedom

Any man or woman who will not resist restrictions on moral, religious, and political freedom is fit only for slavery and the grave. Bishop Turner, Dr. Stringer, and their like were the apostles of Christian and political freedom. And they left their footprints upon the sands of time for the emulation of Negro youth.

We should never offend others, even when insulted, be they white or black, but we should let all men know that every man, woman, and child is entitled to respect, and to life, liberty, and the pusuit of happiness, under God. Those distant days were dark and stormy, and history can repeat itself. Therefore it behooves all of us to arm ourselves with sobriety, and be law abiding, respectful and kind, but still be manly men and womanly women. For we have among us too many worthless men and women. We are still between the nether and the upper millstones, but, as a people, God will be on our side, if we are on his side, true and faithful. And princes out of Egypt and Ethiopia shall be seen stretching their hands to God, for the Book has said it, and it shall be so.

We must walk in the footsteps of Richard Allen, Fred Douglas, Daniel Alexander Payne, Booker T. Washington, Toussaint L'Ouverture, George Washington Carver, Lawrence Jones, and others of their kind. These men are perfect examples for our emulation. Spineless and shiftless persons can never amount to much, but the men and women who work, watch, and pray will reach their goals.

From Yazoo County to Vicksburg in Search of Better Things

While at P. Line Home Plantation, Captain S. H. Parasol

and his wife lived in a summer mansion, and through the Reverend George Clark, a minister of the Baptist church, we became prottégés of this rich captain of the P. Line Steamboats, numbering seven or more river packets, and, like the great man of Obadiah, we were fed daily from this rich man's table. This kindhearted Baptist minister told my father of a better place — Vicksburg — which was more heavenly.

After making a trip to see this goodly land, it became our good fortune to be able to move there, where one could get what he earned and where the school facilities were far above the ordinary.

We All Become African Methodist Episcopalians

Dad had the innate principle of ethnology, racial consciousness, and after hearing the Reverend K. D. Brown, the presiding elder, preach, my father, my younger brother, and I joined the little A.M.E. church by the roadside, near Vicksburg. The Reverend Dr. Brown placed his heavy hands upon my head and, strange to say, from that time to this day his spirit, along with that of Drs. Stringer, E. W. Lampton and H. C. Bruce, has been mine to share and revere. The daughter of Dr. Brown, Mrs. Willie F. Wilson, lives in Grenada, Mississippi, and is a leading citizen. She's a retired public school teacher and a leading officer in the Greater Powell A.M.E. Church.

My younger brother and I were the only young members of Abra Chapel, as it was then called. It is now called Travis Chapel, and has been moved from the dismal swamp by the road nearer the railroad, near Vicksburg. It has a membership of over one hundred. From this church some dozen young men have gone into the ministry. I was the first young minister ordained from this church.

Elementary School Training at Vicksburg

Situated on Cage Jones's small farm, we felt like birds loosed from a cage, and soon I took advantage of the opportunity to attend the public school under the tutorship of Professor G. R. Custard, a very efficient teacher, who taught the elementary classes. Military training was given by Professor Albert S. Barnes. Later, I studied under the learned Christian leader, Professor W. H. Reynolds, who subsequently became president of Alcorn College, the State school for colored folks seeking both academic and commercial training.

My Calling to the Ministry

Even as a small child I felt a love for the Divine Being, and at the age of five I was a children's preacher, holding meetings under an improvised brush shelter or an arbor. My first text was "Children, what will the people do, when the ducks eat up all the mud out of the ponds?" My second text was "We are come sinner hunting, and devil driving." Strange to say, on the third of these children's meetings, a girl of eight fell under conviction and for two days was in a daze. That was the end of my child-preacher career, for the old folks threatened me should another meeting be called. However, I still had a latent feeling for the church, and at eight was happily converted while in the cotton field picking cotton. Like Saul on the Damascus Road, I heard, I felt, but I saw no man, not even a little white man, as most people said in those days, before they were accepted into the church. The minister who received me and my younger brother said to me, when I told him only what I felt, "Young boy, you have pure religion. Stick to it."

Out of a class of twenty or more, nearly all returned to the world, but having "obtained help from God," I have continued until this day. I have always loved the church, because it was said that it had come to me as a blessing from my

grandfather, when he baptized me. But since very few youths associated with me and my brother, either in class or church services, I became a bit lonely, yet I hung on.

Plucked as a Brand From a Destructive Fire

At fourteen, while working at Hebron's gin on a double shift, the gin suddenly caught fire. Having worked all day and up to the third shift at night, after being relieved I went to bed in the cotton room, and quickly fell asleep. A little before dawn I heard, in my sleep, the cry of "Fire! Fire!" Something touched me and I woke up in the smoke-filled room. In a matter of seconds, I rushed to the door leading upstairs and leaped to the ground. Then I remembered my brother, who had come to keep me company the night before. I looked for him among those who had escaped. He was not among them. Then I heard his screams. He was trapped inside in the blazing fire. He was burned to a crisp while I was safe and sound. To this day, I feel that I should have endangered my life to try to save him. However, it was also impressed upon me that I was saved to preach the Gospel. Never, however, shall I get over the loss of my brother, who loved me as Jonathan loved David.

A Narrow Escape From Being Shot to Death

Misery likes company. One Sunday night, I did not attend prayer service, but went off with a crowd of my schoolmates. Suddenly I was shot down. The bullet lodged just below my heart. It was an accident, but I took it as my second and last warning.

Persuaded That I Must Preach the Gospel, Despite My Bashfulness

The pastor, the Reverend H. C. Bruce, and my class lead-

er held a conference about my being called to the ministry. Though I had not made it known, my attitude toward the church and the discharge of my membership duties, both in the Sunday school and the church, indicated unmistakably that I was obviously called to do spiritual work for God, and without my knowing it the pastor made an appointment for me to exhort, one Tuesday night. I yielded, but not having the proper clothes I was embarrassed. I took courage, nevertheless, and washed and ironed my common clothes, and was at the church before the congregation arrived. I remained concealed, but at the proper moment I appeared. Several hundred people appeared, for it was out of the ordinary for a youth my age to assume the ministry in those days.

I exhorted from the third chapter of Mathew 1-12. I was very deliberate, having committed to memory what I was going to say. I talked just twenty minutes, and at the conclusion a young lady was converted and joined the church. Now, thought I, I am ready. Here I am. I will go. Send me. My grandfather, Anthony Gant, died just two weeks later, near Selma, Alabama, before I preached my sermon declamation. And his mantle fell upon me that week.

The Reverend Dr. Thomas W. Stringer, the presiding elder, asked me to repeat the twenty-five articles of religion. To his surprise, I repeated all of them perfectly.

"Well," he said, "umph!" Then and there he gave me my license to preach, not to exhort, which was the usual method.

My First Annual Conference

In company with the Reverends H. B. Parks, who became Bishop Parks in 1908, H. C. Bruce, W. F. Dangerfield, S. W. White, and others I went to Yazoo City and witnessed the meeting and work of the Annual Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Bishop T. M. D. Ward was then the presiding Bishop. A veritable giant of a man, in body, brains, and eloquence. He never seemed to be in a hurry. His

eyes were clear and flashing, and his voice, when lifted, was like soft peals of thunder. His words cut to the quick and and were as sharp as lightning. All the ministers lionized him, for he was kind, and seldom in bad temper. He loved all men, but disliked praise from them. He seldom used the pronoun "I." He gave an exhortation before the Conference adjourned. Often when he preached both the people and other ministers would become so moved that he would be compelled to cease.

During the Conference, he never went out at night. He read his appointments on Monday morning at four o'clock and if a minister did not take his appointment in person, unless he was sick, he would not receive another until the next conference, a year hence. He was never discouraged by setbacks, but always heroic and strong. His instructions were "Go to your charge. Beat the Devil there. Set the community on hallowed fire, like Samson's foxes that burned up the Philistine corn. Preach the Gospel and learn lessons from the giant oaks, the whispering pines, the rock-ribbed hills and mountains, from God's winged songsters, and the smiling roses and flowers." His favorite hymn, as I remember, was "Jesus, the name high over all. . . ." Seemingly, he had few favorites, but he loved men who could do things, and preach. It is said that he could be a tyrant if faced with insubordination, and made no apology for his harshness. Dr. Stringer, and the Reverends K. D. Brown, E. R. Carter, M. B. Baily, L. M. Michel, Andrew Jackson, H. B. Parks, and James Porter were the men of the first rank; the Reverends P. H. Fisher, S. W. White, H. C. Bruce, W. F. Dangerfield, J. Jones, and E. W. Lampton were men of the second rank; but they all loved Bishop Ward with a reverence beyond expression.

The Protégé of the Reverend Bruce

The Reverend H. C. Bruce was not a trained minister but he possessed something out of the ordinary. He could see

in a young man or woman what others could not see. During the two years of his pastorate at Haynes Bluff Circuit, I was his protégé and he kept me in a strategic place in the church. Therefore, when he changed from Haynes Bluff Circuit to Chotard, Mississippi, he was loath to go without me, just as Paul was careful about Timothy. He persuaded my parents to let me go with him on his new charge, and said it would be better both for me and for them, a fact that neither my parents nor I realized. However, it proved to be a boon for all of us, including the Reverend Bruce, for when he was in his dotage I came to his rescue more than once out of gratitude for his kindness. As a final gesture, I delivered the eulogy at his funeral at Campbell College, and dedicated his last resting place at Jackson — Washington Addition Cemetery.

So I followed him by steamboat to Chotard. There he succeeded in having me hired by a colored lease tenant, Ellis Derrington, at $12.50 per month and board. But he insisted that it be understood that I should eat at the same table with him, for he also boarded with Mr. Derrington. I was also given a place in his parsonage and had all the privileges of his library. After eight months, I had ravished his library and learned the fundamentals of Methodist doctrine.

My First Sermon

The text of my first sermon was "I am That I Am" from Exodus 3:14. It was delivered at Old St. Luke A. M. E. Church (now no more). Hundreds of folks came to hear me, and by the grace of God they were not disappointed, for the Lord was with me, and the effects of that sermon lasted for a quarter of a century. Afterwards all the young folks, when meeting me, would say, "I Am That I Am."

Needless to say, the Reverend Bruce saw to it that I did not come in contact with worthless company and I rested the proper number of hours.

My First Big Money

My credit account was $9.50, the money due me about $90.00. So after nine months I said good-by to Chotard, and from that day until this I have had the pleasure of being my own master. I have never been ashamed to work, and, better still, I learned at that time that labor without the sense of thrift amounts to nothing but being a slave to an employer.

I went back home to help my parents. Since I had no financial worries now, I applied myself to study. I bought the required books to prepare for entrance into the conference that was to meet at Vicksburg, in December 1889.

Admission into the North Mississippi Conference

On Wednesday morning, December 28, 1889, the North Mississippi Conference convened in the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, at Vicksburg. Bishop Richard Randolph Disney was delayed, owing to the heavy snows, his residence being in Chatham, Canada.

The Conference opened on schedule, however, then elected the Reverend Dr. Thomas W. Stringer president, in accordance with procedure. Bishop Disney arived on Thursday, the day after the Conference opened.

Bishop A. Grant was guest bishop, assigned to the care of Dr. H. B. Parks, pastor. When the Conference opened on Thursday morning, Bishop Grant raised a point of procedure. He said that, as a bishop of the A. M. E. Church, and the presiding Bishop of Texas-Louisiana, he should have been invited to preside the day before in the absence of Bishop Disney. After some discussion, Bishop Disney ruled out the first day's proceedings and ordered the Conference begun as of the present session.

I learned then that whenever any bishop of the A. M. E. Church is present, he should be given the Chair, as presiding

officer. Bishop Disney had recently united the B.M.E. Church and the A.M.E. Church, and was the presiding Bishop of the Eighth Episcopal District (Mississippi and Arkansas). Eighteen ministers including myself were presented to this Conference for admission, and on Friday night the class was examined in Old Bethel Hall, from nine o'clock until daybreak. The examiners soon observed that I had had some schooling and was perfectly informed in the doctrines and usages of the Church. Therefore they made me secretary and helper in the examination. We all were admitted in a few days, and much time was given to preaching and speaking. Bishop Grant did much of the preaching and speaking. He had been elected a bishop just eight months before, at the General Conference at Indianapolis, Indiana. All ministers at that time, with a few exceptions, wore long, black frock coats, either clergy or Prince Albert style. The Reverends Alex Hollins, C. M. Hayden, Lee Hall, and W. F. Dangerfield sang plantation melodies. Professors James Porter, R. C. Holbrooks and A. B. Poston, of Kosciusko, were the only trained ministers at the Conference, but spirits were high, and on watch night the meeting was thrilled by songs and invocations.

Money was scarce. Wilberforce University, at Xenia, Ohio, was the only connected college. Dr. Bedford Greene, was then Educational Treasurer at Nashville, Tennessee. He announced that the receipts on Wilberforce Endowment Day were $8,000. Today the A. M. E. Church annually raises approximately two million dollars for the support of our schools, and counting Africa they have an enrollment of over ten thousand students.

Despite much unrest and many shortcomings, the A. M. .E Church, like the Negro race, has come a long way since Richard Allen and fifteen others struck the first blow for religious freedom.

Bishop Disney was a refined, kindhearted gentleman, and on Sunday he preached from the text "Oh, Give Thanks

to God." He was eloquent and fervent in his preaching, and many of the ministers considered him their model preacher. Like Bishop Ward, he would not read the appointments on Sunday. Early on Monday morning, however, we all met to hear our appointments and — disappointments. I happened to be in the latter class; I was woefully disappointed.

My Perseverance Gets Me an Appointment

After leading the class in the examination for admission, I had felt assured that I would receive a nice little charge, but my name was not called. This was a shock to me. I did not know that my Presiding Elder, the Reverend Bruce, and my mother had conspired to keep me at home because of my youth. Also, I was needed at home — my father was in his dotage — to work the crop. But I was determined to go into the ministry and take part in battling for the Lord. All the Presiding Elders insisted that I return home for another year, and asked me not to trouble the Bishop. But my willfulness pushed me forward, and the Bishop was informed that a young preacher wanted to come to his room and see him. He said to the doorkeeper, "Let him in." So I entered the Bishop's room and told him my story. He then called the Presiding Elders together for a special conference. "Can't you find a place for this young brother?" "No, no, no, Bishop," they chorused. Finally the Reverend M. B. Baily said that he had a mission at Corinth, Mississippi. Several A. M. E.'s were there. "Well," said the Bishop, "why not send him there?" They all consented but Dr. Stringer, who said, "But his mother objects to his going away. They need him as plowboy." "Well," I flashed out, "Bishop, God sent me to preach." Then without further argument the Bishop wrote the appointment, signed it, folded it, and gave it to me, saying, "God bless you, my boy." He smiled and shook my hand.

Out I went with the crowd, with only a few dollars in

my pocket. I was three months getting to Corinth, for I could not preach my way, being a stranger, but the good Presiding Elder, the Reverend Baily, aided me and kept me with him at Aberdeen for a while.

Off to Corinth with Five Cents in my Pocket

I was all day on the train, but held onto my five cents, all I had. Arriving at Corinth just before nightfall, I tried to find an A.M.E., but like Abraham's quest in old Sodom, I found not a one of them. An old brother, John Anderson, I accosted, said, "I used to belong to that thing but now I'm a Baptist and ain't so much bothered about them." Then again, "I have all girl children, and no men can sleep in my house."

A storm was brewing. Soon a cold rain and sleet began to fall. I decided to call upon the pastor of the M. E. church, not knowing that in many instances there was segregation in the Christian churches just as there is today. The pastor, Reverend J. M. Nevels, would not invite me in out of the storm and freezing rain, but said, "Brother, four miles ahead of you, northeast, you will find a few A. M. E.'s at Farmington." I felt disgusted. I found, as I find today, that in our ministry we have many who would be called preachers of God, but who have not the first prerequisite for it as given by Christ: "By this the world will know that you are my disciples by your loving one another." From that day until this I have observed that many may be called to the ministry but only a few are *chosen.*

With Faith in God, I Walk Through the Storm to a Refuge

After walking three miles in the dark and the storm I came to a creek, but there was a washout at that point. Many a youth would have retraced his steps, but I had learned the hard way that there is no rosy path to success.

I walked up that creek and soon found a partly broken-down fence that crossed the creek. I climbed along it and was soon on the other side. A few hours later, I was in the midst of my mission field. I passed several homes after bedtime. I called out at each one but there was no response until about ten o'clock, when finally a door was opened, and an old man appeared. I told him my story. He said that he had but one bed for himself and his old woman but that he would take me to another house, where a former officer of their little church lived. Onward we walked. I was hungry, not having eaten a morsel of food for twenty-four hours, except for a few ginger snaps at noon hour. Arriving at Brother Harrison's house, Brother Gillispie introduced me as the new preacher. My status seemed to provoke this once-upon-a-time "officer." For hours I was grilled by this brother Christian whose name was Chisholm. By twelve, my clothes had nearly dried on my body and I couldn't keep my eyes open. The former officer's wife kindly asked that I be given a place to sleep. He yielded, and I went to sleep in semi-damp clothing, but I suffered no serious results.

The next morning, it was still raining heavily. After I had eaten a little bread and molasses, I felt better. I noticed that the rain had ceased for a few moments, so I went out beneath a giant oak, got down on my knees, and besought God through Christ to help me.

Returning to the house, I found a white gentleman there who had taken shelter from the rain. The children also were home because of the rain. They could not get to school. One of the boys, who was in the sixth grade, asked the white man to solve a special problem. "No," said the white gentleman, "I can't. Ask that young man in the other room. Maybe he can help you." The boy came to me for help and in a few moments I handed him the problem, solved.

The white gentleman, observing this, took the man of the house outside and said to him, "You-all around here better keep this young fellow. He can do you much good."

Then, in less than ten minutes, the man of the house returned and said to me, "Preacher, make yourself at home. Be at ease. I am going to talk to the rest of the people. I am sure you will succeed here." And that was that.

After a few weeks I succeeded in reorganizing the mission and we soon had a good church. I was inspired to be a man among men because of the hard problem I had. I was well cared for, however, and added many members to the church. Finally, after two years, I was ordered to another field. I left Corinth with many, many regrets.

Penny Wise, Pound Foolish

I had a new Presiding Elder after my first year's pastorate, and being thrifty and industrious I had a bank account, which my new Presiding Elder knew about. Just before Conference, he asked me for a small loan, which I immediately refused. The Conference met at Senatobia. I made a nice report, but this Presiding Elder recommended that I be sent to Cob Switch, near Columbus, Mississippi. This place was called "Hell's Half Acre." He gave me $1.50 mission money.

While I was wrongly treated, I learned a lesson: Charity (Greek: *agapo*) is kind. I should have shared my wealth.

My Short Stay at "Hell's Half Acre"

I had now learned that, first of all, it was my duty, to go wherever I was sent as a minister of the gospel; that is a minister's obligation. But to *stay* at a given place is another thing entirely. I knew that I had been ill-treated but I went to Cob Switch, nevertheless. The church building was a common shack, and the offering was one dollar and ten cents. The members were poor and semi-slaves. Black molasses and cornbread was the common meal. The next Sunday, I went to Mayhew, the other part of "Hell's Half

Acre." Having only one dollar and ten cents, I walked eighteen miles to Mayhew, for I believed that it was wise to hold fast to what I had since things were at such a low ebb.

I met with about thirty people at Mayhew that Sunday night, and the offering was fifteen cents. The next day, I walked back to Cobb Switch. I found a meal nicely prepared for me — tender beef stew — that was delicious. However, the next day, while the people were in the fields, the agent of the plantation went from house to house in search of fresh beef. Whoever had cooked the beef stew had done so by night, and then had buried the rest of the meat. The agent found nothing. But I determined, like David, that I would not eat any more stolen meat for which men had made such a sacrifice. I decided to make my getaway. The following day I left Cobb Switch.

My Presiding Elder reluctantly assigned me to the West Point Circuit and the Lord blessed my labor there with forty-odd converts.

An epidemic of grippe was sweeping through the section at the time, and Bishop Disney, Drs. M. E. Bryant, K. D. Brown and others were victims. I, by the grace of God, though stricken, did not succumb.

In those days the ministers of the A.M.S. Church, when appointed to the hilly parts of Mississippi, called such appointments "starvation" or Rabbit Holler. I soon made my way back to the Delta, called the Bottoms. For several years, I ate the sweet fruits of the Delta. Bishop Arnette had a personal liking for me, but he said, "You ought to go to school," so he sent me back to the hills, to Okolona, where there were only four A.M.E.'s, and one of the four was sick. I had a little money, and being young and aggressive I feared well at Okolona. After biding my time there for six months, the Lord had compassion on me. After all the churches had failed in their series of meetings, I launched a four-week attack upon the common enemy. That little city witnessed one of the greatest revivals ever held there before or since.

Sixty converts were made and they joined the various churches.

Another Disappointment

The Presiding Elders thought I deserved a promotion since my work had been so successful — making bricks without straw. I was appointed to Cold Water Station. Bishop Turner, then the presiding bishop, however, reversed the whole affair and again sent me to the Delta, to a Tunica Mission. The Bishop said that Cold Water Station was a man's appointment, and after years of sober thinking about it, I know now that the Bishop was eminently right.

Snatching Success out of the Jaws of Defeat at Tunica

I succeeded the Reverend R. C. Holbrocks, who had a masterly mind and was one of our most able ministers as well as a highly social individual. I was neither. Therefore, in a few months, a membership of fifty dwindled to eight. The Presiding Elder suggested that I leave, and I was perfectly willing to be moved elsewhere, but one steward said, "Elder, Morant is not what the people want, but he is what the people need. I will stand for all the money." Hence I remained, regained all the members and at one time raised over five hundred dollars. This accomplishment turned out to be the bridgehead to my future success.

Bishop Turner Harshly Rebukes Me — My Victory

My report from Tunica was excellent and I was elected statistician. However, I still had a burning hope for ministerial training, so I petitioned the Conference for a scholarship to Wilberforce University, at Xenia, Ohio. Inadvertently, in making my appeal to the Conference, I said, among other things, that I did not want to be the kind of a minister who

harangued the people with his fingers in his ears, spitting, sweating, and stumping. I had no more than sat down when Bishop Turner took the floor and harshly rebuked me. He said that I critized the old fathers, and so on. For a half hour the Conference was in an uproar. Many favored the Bishop's encomium upon the old gospel heroes. After the Bishop took his seat, I quietly arose and said, "God forbid that I should critize the pioneers of the gospel ministry, for my grandfather, who died a member of the Alabama Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, was a pioneer minister. But hear me. I am speaking about the kind of minister we need to go before the youth of tomorrow."

Bishop Turner immediately reversed himself and said, "We'll vote Morant the scholarship." Dr. E. W. Lampton made the motion and all voted me a scholarship, but not a dime was appropriated for my traveling expenses. This, I have always believed, was my greatest victory. While I did not take kindly to the uproar against me before I was heard, I felt, as I feel even now, that it was my acid test.

I Go to Help My Mother and Her Fatherless Children

Fortunately, I had a bank account of about five hundred dollars. I could have gone to Wilberforce in style, but I remembered the fifth commandment: "Honor thy father and thy mother . . ." My conscience would not allow me to leave without helping my poor mother and her poverty-stricken children who had labored so long under the hellish share-cropping system. So I took every dollar I had and purchased teams, farming tools and then paid for six months' supplies for the family. I saw to it that they leased a "forty" and, by the grace of God, directed by my older brother D.R., the family made forty bales of cotton, which at that time was selling for six cents. They cleared over one thousand dollars. From that time on the family lived as respectable people should, free from semi-slavery. And from that time until

the present moment, I feel that God has wonderfully blessed me because I looked after my mother and her children, like Moses, who chose to share the sufferings of his people rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin in Egypt. This lesson many, yea, the majority, of our present-day young folk have not yet learned, which is very unfortunate.

From Vicksburg on a Cold Wednesday Morning

On a cold Wednesday morning, I headed for Wilberforce University. I had hoped to stop at many places along the way, but between a steady rainfall and the lukewarmness of our ministry it did not work out as I had planned, with the exception of Dr. A. H. Mevs, at Greenville, a graduate of Wilberforce, and the Reverend L. H. Lewis, at Tunica, my successor. They aided me as best they could. I left Tunica with only half my fare to Wilberforce, and stopped at Memphis, Tennessee, knowing not what would befall me there.

An incident had taken place at Tunica, when I was closing out my final year's work. The Reverend T. S. Johnson, pastor of St. Andrew's A.M.E. Church in Memphis, was on his vacation and stopped at Tunica, one evening, near nightfall. I happened to observe him as he alighted from the train, and soon found out that he was an A.M.E. minister of great distinction. He was in a quandary as to a nice lodging place, and I quickly solved his problem by making arrangements for him where I was boarding. He spent several days and gave an exhibition of his Bible scenery. Being liberal-minded, I helped to make his scenery exhibition a success. Then he returned to Memphis.

My Charity Is Returned

It was snowing when I arrived in Memphis, but I remembered my kindness toward the Reverend Johnson and wandered to his parsonage. As soon as he saw me he recognized

me, and remembered what I had done for him at Tunica. Immediately he looked to my comfort and care. He told his wife how I had provided for him in Tunica. "And Mattie," he said, "this young man would not accept one penny from me." After finding out my objective, he said, "Son, it is too cold for you to go to Ohio just now. Abide with me, and be contented. Help me with my meetings and social program."

On Sunday, he asked me to help at the services at St. Andrew's. I could sing well, and one song was my favorite, "Hallelujah, it is done . . ." The people enjoyed my singing and short twenty-minute homilies. A great revival, which shook the city, broke out, and one hundred souls were converted, most of whom joined St. Andrew's Church.

Over one hundred dollars was given to me at the close of the great revival and many gifts of value. Dr. Johnson gave me all of the final offering.

Off to Wilberforce University

Dr. Johnson made all my reservation, prepared a great lunch basket, and saw me off on the L & N train to Cincinnati. This I never forgot, and I am glad I was able to show him kindness after he became old and cast aside, selling papers in Birmingham, Alabama. Peace to his ashes and felicity to his soul.

I had never before traveled very far, and the trip from Memphis was like going to heaven in a chariot. The thought of Wilberforce getting nearer and nearer kept me in high gear. I realized how much I was blessed in being able to go beyond the Mason-Dixon line, which I had heard so much about, and observe people who were polite and kind. Sleep left my eyes, because of my joy on this very hopeful journey. Another pleasure was to be so well off financially. I had left home without means, walking by faith, and now I had reached the Canaan of my life.

Once in Ohio, I felt a bit shy about talking with white folks, and would not sit beside them, although there was not much segregation. However, I segregated myself, and when a white man would sit beside me, I tried not to divide the seat with him and even showed signs of being insulted. Green, of course.

The Dream of My Life Comes True

From earliest youth, my earnest and constant desire had been to attend Wilberforce University. I knew that it was the only Negro-controlled college, that it was an A.M.E. school, that the Church could put a worthy young minister through, and that men I admired had gone there. I had heard Bishop Ward tell about the sons of Reverends K. D. Brown, E. R. Carter, and M. E. Davis, who were attending Wilberforce.

Though poor and without hope, from a pecuniary viewpoint, my urge could not be blunted, and though many obstacles were scattered in my path and the goal seemed impossible to achieve, I persevered toward it for six years. People in general considered me one of the best young preachers of that time. I read many books, but when I came across a Greek or Latin word I had to guess its meaning. This made me only the more anxious to study the ancient languages. I had heard also that Professor W. S. Seabough, of Wilberforce University, had written a Greek Grammar and was one of the greatest scholars of that day, regardless of race. Such things constantly spurred me to push ahead and be a master. The Lord was with me and I slacked not my reins, but drove ahead, ringing no backing bells at any time.

President Samuel Mitchel knew of me, for I had been writing him for some three months, saying in the main, "I am on my way; look for me." Mr. Clay, the old wagon driver, met me at Xenia. The next day, the president held a closed-door conference with me and gave me an examination that was very satisfactory. "How long do you mean to study at Mil-

berforce?" he asked. I flashed right back, "Until I have finished." He looked at me wistfully. Five years later he remembered what I had said on that snowy day.

My elementary training at the Vicksburg school now proved of great advantage. I was classified as a Freshman without initiation, for it was discovered that I was a son of the East and needed nothing common. To stay attached to the seminary, I was made the protégé of Dr. J. C. Caldwell, now of sacred memory. But for his firm hand, I would have been soon penniless. As I had money, the students came to me daily for loans, which they never could have repaid. But my banker, Professor Caldwell, would not disburse the cash.

Smoky Row Experiences

Five or six two-room cabins built close together were noted for the noise that came from them when some forty or fifty young men between twenty and thirty, domiciled there, got together. The section was called "Smoky Row." It got its name because the students went there during study periods to smoke "three-for's" (cheroots). At three for five cents, each could be cut in two to provide six "smokers." Since I had money I would treat the crowd. One night the watchman sensed that we having a "smoker," but the boys would not let the old man in. We all were reported on suspicion, but the president had such a high regard for me that he would not take us to task, although he made some new restrictions. As a result of that incident I was moved to the seminary in Mitchel Hall.

My First Commencement at Wilberforce — 1896

The faculty had observed my ambition, and allowed me the privilege of taking part in commencement in order that my ambition might not be curbed, for only higher-classified students participated in the exercises. My subject was "Pa-

tience and Perseverance," but I fell in third place on my delivery and felt forlorn. The next day Bishop Arnette's youngest son said to me, "Mr. Morant, I congratulate you on your attempt last evening." That was the only compliment I received, but I vowed that whatever it might cost I would someday win the applause of the students and people. Two years later, I won my crown as one of the master orators.

The Graduating Class

Two trustees were allowed full membership on the board from every Annual Conference, and while the money collected was but a pittance, the spirit was high. The plumed knights of oratory were W. D. Chapelle, J. I. Lowe, Joshua Jones, R. H. W. Leak, Phil Hubbard, J. A. Davis, and W. H. Mixon.

The spirit of Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne lived then and it lives now, but in another way. It will always live if the word of God is true, for, says the Apocalypse, "Blessed are the dead who dieth in the Lord, Yea saith the spirit. They rest from their labors and their works follow them."

The graduating class included Will Board, valedictorian, whose oration on John Brown was a masterpiece, Josh Maxwell, and Charles Burrus, from the college department, and the Reverend J. C. Caldwell, Harry Anderson, and J. H. Brewer from the seminary. Three thousand were in attendance under a big tent. There were more whites then, than now, in the audience.

My Impression of Bishop B. F. Lee

Learned, liberal, kindhearted, honorable, honest as the day is long, and dedicated to a life of purity in a way that very few men appreciated, or understood — that was Bishop B. F. Lee.

After commencement, though he did not know me, I ap-

plied to him for an appointment as a pastor. He answered, "Can't you find a summer job?" "Yes, sir," I said, "but I will not be able to attend church services." Then I added, "And woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." This impressed him, but he only said, "Come back in the morning, Brother Morant, at nine-thirty."

Saturday at the appointed time I was back in his office. "Well, are you ordained?" "Yes, sir," I answered, "just a few months, by Bishop Arnette, before coming to Wilberforce University." "Well," he said, "I am sending you to Piqua, Ohio, forty-five miles from here. It is a nice little charge where one of our strongest ministers recently died. I question my own wisdom in sending you there, but go ahead and do the best you can." As he handed me the appointment he said, "God bless you, Brother Morant."

I felt as I had only once before in my life, and that was when Bishop Disney had said the same words to me. Happy, I took the appointment, and within a few hours I was off to Piqua, a city of twenty thousand people.

I met with a cold reception at Cyrene Church in Piqua. A kindhearted but weak-minded man, Brother Evans, was waiting as I left the train. I introduced myself as the new pastor of the A.M.E. Church. "Well," said Brother Evans, "these are good people, but they don't care very much about a dark preacher. But you are a nice-looking young man, and from Wilberforce, and you may do pretty well." From two o'clock until about six o'clock that evening, Brother Evans directed me to the homes of some dozen or more members, which was a good advertisement for Sunday services. The members, however, looked askance at my youthfulness, and seemed to be suspending judgment.

I Take Advantage of an Opportunity, Which Turns the Tide

At an ice-cream party at the church on Saturday night, I was a self-appointed guest, but the affair was a failure. The

stewardesses were in despair, with two gallons of ice cream on hand and no one to eat it. I thought about Jesus at the feast of Cana, when they had no wine. So I bought the two gallons of ice cream and gave them to all present free, as my contribution. And, amazingly, it worked.

The Acid Test

At ten-thirty Sunday morning, the chapel was packed with listeners. Brother Joe Wilson, the self-appointed supply pastor for Dr. John Asbury, who had passed just a month before, did not even recognize me and barely spoke to me. But at the appointed moment, I took charge of the service, outlined the program from A to Z, and conducted it from memory, as there was no ritual. This attracted the congregation, for few ministers can carry out the service without a guide. The text was from Romans 1:16. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ . . ." I knew nothing about homiletics, but my theme was the Gospel. Later on, I saw that the sermon was homiletically arranged and the effects of it were beyond expression, for God had used me for his purpose and even today that sermon is remembered. From that Sunday until the Annual Conference, we succeeded.

I Study During the Summer

A young man, a student at Wilberforce University, knowing my need for English and Latin, gave me daily lessons from June until October. As a result, after returning to Wilberforce and taking an examination, I was promoted a whole year. I was regarded as something of a prodigy in the seminary from that time until the day I received my diploma. I learned to read Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic during my first two years in the seminary, and always made 95 or 98 in examinations.

That year I attended the North Ohio Conference, at

Cleveland. It was held in St. John's A.M.E. Church, near Lake Erie. Bishop R. C. Ransome, then Dr. Ransome, was pastor, and at that time the last word in oratory and biblical lore. Bishop B. W. Arnette was the guest bishop. He gave a lecture on the freeing of the Negro and the Emancipation Proclamation. He recalled vividly from memory the stirring events of those days. I learned that in many respects we are a peculiar people and not very grateful for what Abraham Lincoln, Fred Douglas, Richard Allen, Bishop Daniel A. Payne, Booker T. Washington, and their like have done for our race. The North Ohio Conference was a success.

When I returned to Wilberforce, I was appointed to the Dayton Mission. Rather than ride with Bishop Lee, I walked back to Xenia. I was deeply disappointed. I had not realized that by not being a member of the Ohio conference I had no status as a minister in that conference and was not subject to appointment on merits. Having made good at the Piqua station, I thought I was entitled to the best.

My Career at Payne Seminary

While I was pastor at Piqua, Bishop Lee and the Reverend Dr. John G. Mitchel, dean of the Seminary, made special visits to that charge, and I spared no pains in making it comfortable for them. I did not know that I was under inspection as a prospect both for the Seminary and Cyrene Chapel A.M.E. Church.

The Bishop spent a Sabbath with me, after which I purchased his ticket back to Wilberforce. I also gave him his expenses to Piqua, adding six dollars extra. "Why, Brother Morant, what is this for?" he asked. "Just a little expense money, for you have Frank (his son) with you," I replied. "Well, Frank is not a preacher and the Church has nothing to do with Frank's expenses. Carry the six dollars back to the trustees," he said. I was impressed by his saintliness.

When I returned to Wilberforce, I found that Dr. Mitchel

had reserved my room, and I was registered as a junior on the student roll of Payne Seminary. My name is there today on the roll of honor. The members of the faculty besides Dean Mitchel were Professor W. S. Scarbough and Professor George F. Woodson. These three were men and teachers of the highest caliber. The Reverends H. E. Stewart, J. H. Johnson, W. S. Seabrooks, and myself formed the junior class, and with the exception of the Reverend Seabrooks, for three years we were classed as ideal students of high rank and model deportment.

Those were difficult days in regard to comfort and food, but we were all resourceful and frugal, and made the best of what was available to us. I was a year behind most of my fellow students, including my Mississippi fellow associates, the Reverends R. A. Adams and James A. Larkins, but I had the advantage of having had better elementary training as well as some experience in the field. I had learned that experience is the one training without which only men of genius can succeed in any great undertaking. The divine call is another energizing factor in the gospel ministry. With the help of these and excellent instructors, I learned both classical and hellenistic Greek and Hebrew as a duck takes to water. My knowledge of ancient languages has strengthened my mind as well as aided my vocabulary.

The Reverends O. E. Jones, O. L. Moody, William Peck, W. T. Vernon, H. F. Braye, R. A. Adams, and A. H. Hill were my chums and friends. We ate of the same loaf of bread, and shared our fellowship and tribulations. Only the Reverend Dr. H. E. Stewart and myself are still on this side of the river of life, and I alone am militant against the common enemy.

My Joyful Day of Graduation

I was graduated with a ninety-five per cent average for the following subjects: English Bible, Pastoral Theology, Classi-

cal Greek, Hellenistic Greek, Church History, Church Doctrine, Aramaic, Methodology, Hebrew, Vulgate, Church and Ecclesiastical Law, Sacred Geography, Homiletics, Elocution and Rhetoric, Apologetics, Hermeneutics, Harmony of the Old and New Testaments, The Epistles, and Prophecy.

At the Commencement exercises, the Reverend Dr. H. E. Stewart and I represented the Theological Department, and, to my surprise, when President Mitchel handed me my diploma and conferred on me the degree of Bachelor of Divinity, he made this statement: "Five years ago, this young man said to me, when asked how long he was going to stay at Wilberforce, 'Until I have finished,' and he has finished today." Three thousand persons applauded.

I Deliver a Graduation Oration on "The Triumph of Right"

"From the day that the first human pair lost their blissful estate in the suburb of Heaven, enmity has engendered a continuous conflict between right and wrong.

"Men and women from every walk of life have entered this conflict for right and played well their parts and have written their names so indelibly on the pages of history that the ravages of time will never be able to efface them.

"As stars of the first magnitude that embrace the assured sky, they shall shine on throughout time into eternity.

"Terrific and perilous have been the conflicts of right against wrong, but like the king of day riding in his fiery chariot, and the silver queen of night, traveling in her beaten path, the forward movement of unconquerable right has been onward and upward.

"His retreats, if retreats they may be called, have been few, and then in good order, and significant of certain Victorian leaders. The fugitive Shepherd was in the background, but soon the die was cast and right triumphed over her thousand foes. Again his standard bearer was hidden behind a murmuring brook, and the day seemed dark, but at

the appointed hour right met the enemy and routed them nor lost a single man.

"Kingdoms and Empires as well as great governments that were barriers to right have fallen to pieces, and their stately monuments of granite and marble have crumpled into dust, and those who questioned his right to reign have been weighed in the balances of justice and found wanting.

"Clothed in his armor of transcending light and right today is the world's beacon light. Right is might, and it has quenched the hottest fire, locked the jaws of lions, wrenched scepters out of the hands of despots and kings, and put their armies to flight. His dominion was once circumscribed, but today his boundary lines extend to the four quarters of the earth. His army that was once but a single batallion is now numbered like the people John saw on the Ile of Patmos. He who is armed with right is armed thrice, and victory is assured. Right is irresistible.

"It will eradicate the greatest evils, correct the most flagrant wrongs, tunnel the mighty Alps and bridge the deepest chasms. And for his cause, daughters will rise up against mothers, and sons against fathers, and nations will fight against nations. The efforts of right will not be futile; neither will his followers recant from the fight. And if the sacrifice must be offered, the victims will be available at an appointed hour. Crimes, mob violence, and racial malevolence must be slackened. Right will stand the acid test and justice will get a hearing.

"Governments may boast that the setting sun never goes down upon their soil and that the morning cannons never cease fire upon their boundaries, but the disregard of law and order and the oppression of the weak and poor will soon become a menace to such people, for greed and selfishness will sooner or later undermine such civilization. Malevolence and hatred may endure for a night, but results of right against wrong will bring joy in the morning.

"For it is written that righteousness exalteth a nation,

but sin and wickedness is a reproach to any people. John Brown's body was offered for the right, but his soul went marching on with joy in others and his death was not in vain. In the triumph of right his followers may be troubled but not distressed; perplexed but not in despair; persecuted but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed.

"And now, sons and daughters of a despised race, part and parcel of this great movement, purchased in a large measure by the blood and toil of your fathers, hear me. Right cannot fail; justice, though asleep a long time, will never die. And though the mills of justice grind slowly they grind exceedingly fine.

"For careless seems the great avenger, history's pages doth record. One death grapple in the darkness, 'twixt the old system and the word. Right, forever on the scaffold; wrong forever on the throne. But that scaffold sways the future and behind the dim unknown. Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own. Right shall reign wherever the sun doth his successive journey run. And his praise shall be sung from shore to shore till moon shall wax and wane no more.

"Right is right since God is God, and right the day will win. To doubt it is disloyalty, and to falter is a sin."

The applause of a thousand people deafened my ears, and I received many presents and gifts of gold and silver.

Some Members of the Class of 1899

Miss Sadie Thompson, a retired teacher, of Natchez, Mississippi, has had a career of a half century. Recently the city constructed an "H" school plant called the Sadie Thompson "H" School at a cost of a half million dollars. Her father, the Reverend J. G. Thompson, was for many years a pastor and a presiding elder in the Mississippi Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Mrs. Addie Thomas, of Wilberforce, Ohio, was the wife

of Chaplain Thomas, who recently passed, and the daughter of Bishop B. F. Lee. Mrs. Emily Vernon was the wife of the late Bishop W. T. Vernon and the daughter of the late Bishop J. C. Embry, J. H. Johnson and William McKnight, were also among the seventy members of the class.

The saddest part of our separation that eventful day was that none of that illustrious class would ever meet again at our Alma Mater.

My Post-Seminary Ministerial Career

Bishop Lee suggested that it would be best for me to take work in Ohio, but he was too modest to tell me why. To my regret, I soon learned the reason. There existed a certain prejudice against ministerial graduates from Wilberforce University in Xenia, Ohio. This was because Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne opposed the election of certain bishops during his lifetime. So we all knew that any minister who attended Wilberforce University in those days must be inculcated with manhood, convictions, courage, and a consciousness and respect for merits.

My Success at Bethel Church, Brookhaven, Mississippi

I succeeded the late Reverend R. A. Adams, one of Mississippi's most efficient and effective ministers. A great revival swept the little town three months after my pastorate began, and a hundred young people were added to the church by confession. Also, as I soon learned, when a church and community are revived, financial success is assured. Therefore my report at the Mississippi Conference at Natchez was the leading one. At the conclusion of that Conference, I was appointed to a charge that was just a little more than a good mission. I took the appointment, but after the adjournment of the Conference I told the Bishop that, owing to my merits, I knew that I was demoted. I suggested that he could

appoint someone else to that place, and transfer me to the Ohio Conference. Bishop W. B. Derrick refused, and finally sent me to Greenwood Station. Bishop Lampton, then Dr. Lampton, interceded for me. He assured the Bishop that I was one young minister who was manly and would not rebel. But, he said, "He knows when he is mistreated and resents it. However, he is trustworthy." This gave me a resetting. A friend in court is there by divine approval. This is something that the members of our group must learn.

While this was a blow below the belt, the Bishop was not the direct cause. His secretary told him that there should be a readjustment. But the laws of the Medes and Persians do not change. Later, the good Bishop offered me a place in New York, but I told him I wanted to die with the Philistines. During this incident, the Reverend Dr. M. W. Thornton was secretary to Bishop Derrick.

At Greenwood, Mississippi, For the Third Time.

I found the little city of Greenwood, Mississippi, in the grip of an epidemic of smallpox when I took charge of the Turner Chapel A.M.E. Church. This was in 1901. All the churches were closed and Turner's Chapel was up for sale. The members were few and weak, both in faith and means. Again I found it was good to have a little money, for it helps when one is willing to use it for a good cause. Otherwise it is trash. The banker, a man named Wilson, whom I consulted about the church debt, a matter of about six hundred dollars, was familiar with me because I had opened a personal account with this bank. He told me that the six hundred dollars owed by the church was way past due, and I must either pay some of it or the church would have to be sold. I then asked him how much he would require. He told me that one hundred dollars would be necessary. I tried to get the presiding elders and other friends to help, and they were willing enough, but they had not even one talent.

With no chance of help from any source, to save the situation I drew on my personal account. Thus I saved Turner's Chapel. which today, having been rebuilt under the leadership of the Reverend Dr. W. M. Portis, is the second best charge in the state of Mississippi.

It took something not far short of a miracle to succeed that year with the odds against African Methodism both within and without. Even the presiding elder was not able to aid; on the contrary, he was an obstruction, being a proselyte. I learned then the reason why Britain, one of the greatest governments of the world, puts none but true Englishmen on guard. And the great problem of the A.M.E. Church today is that it has too many untrained people other than A.M.E.'s in strategic places who have not been trained in the A.M.E. ranks but in other schools and cults. We must have Hebrews of the Hebrews, as St. Paul was.

Bishop Tyree discovered this, when the North Mississippi Conference convened that year in Turner's Chapel. He told the presiding elder that if he crossed a "t" or dotted an "i" to hinder the progress of that struggling charge, it would be his step down and out. Then things picked up.

My Second Year's Work

Several gross crimes had been committed and big newspaper headlines inflamed many people to utter violent threats. But for the Lord and a Methodist minister, I might have gone the way of all mortals, though innocent. My writing was considered inflammatory and a possible source of evil. However, I suffered no violence while in the clutches of three hundred white men. One white man, the Lord, and the pastor of the Methodist Church (white) saved me from death. The Reverend B. G. Shaw, pastor of the A.M.E. Zion Mission of Greenwood, was homeless. I took him in out of the slums and shared my room and food with him. He and I were given eight hours to leave the county. The Reverend Shaw had nothing to do with my writing, but we were always together

as he was a protégé of mine. We left Greenwood together on a Monday evening. But even before I left, still unaware of any danger, while walking beneath a cotton tree I heard a voice from the top of the tree, saying, "John Morant, don't go to the station. Come this way." A path to the right was indicated. Then I observed many men waiting to mob me at the railroad station. The Reverend Shaw and I walked to Tchula, Mississippi, before dawn, for fear of mischief or that we might be apprehended. Finally, sleepy, tired, and hungry, we left the road, and, because it was a warm April night, made the ground our bed. It was nine o'clock when the morning sun touched both of us awake with his golden rays. Then we found that we had slept for five hours among the dead in a colored graveyard. They did us no harm nor did they make any alarm that might have made people think we were fugitives from justice.

I learned from this experience that the dead do not want to do anybody the least harm, and it is the best hiding place — among the dead — for they are innocent; the living are the dangerous ones.

The Reverend Shaw and I separated as did Jonathan and David, and after ten years we met in St. Louis, Missouri, both in charge of our respective churches. Bishop Shaw passed in 1943.

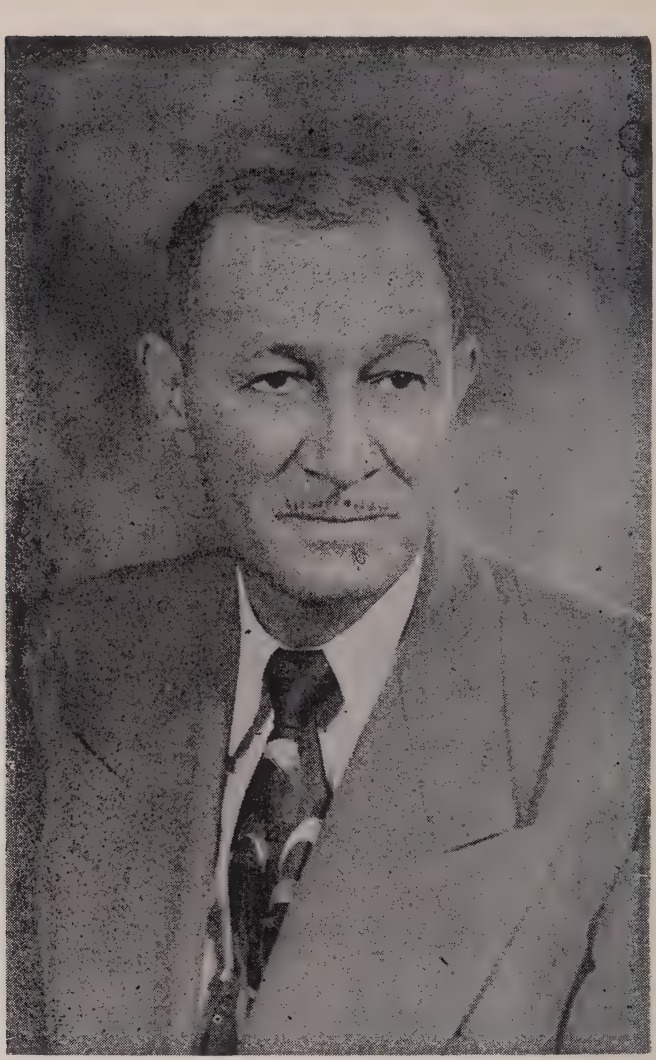
My Good Record Is of Service to My Brother

My brother, Professor A. B. Morant, applied to the County Board of Education for the position of County Director of Agriculture. They looked up the record and found that he was the brother of the Negro preacher, John J. Morant. Then they told him, "We have found that one John J. Morant, who once pastored here, is your brother, and if that is so the job is yours, for your brother has a clean record here." Then for twenty-eight years my brother worked in Leflore County, where in 1949 he fell asleep, and his

BISHOP EDWARD WILKERSON LAMPTON

Dr. Lampton was born in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, the second of five brothers. In his early days as a pastor, he was assigned to the rural circuit, but later he became pastor of the largest station in Mississippi. In 1902, he was elected Financial secretary of the A.M.E. Church. He proved to be a master financier. In 1908, he aroused the General Conference in Norfolk, Virginia, to cheers, when he reported a balance of twenty thousand dollars in the treasury. As a result, he led in the election of Bishops of the Church. The writer, then a young minister, was put in charge of the ballot box by Bishop Lampton to insure a fair count. He loved Mississippi, and was extremely happy when he was assigned to the Mississippi-Louisiana District. His career, alas, was short, for he passed in 1910.

Dr. Lampton became interested in the Masonic order early in life. In 1892, at the death of M. W. Thomas W. Stringer, he was the Grand Junior Warden. As the only ranking officer of the Grand Lodge that could be found, the honor of presiding fell to him. He soon became the idol of the Grand Lodge, although M.W. W. W. McLeod, an eminent lawyer of Jackson, Mississippi, was by office Dr. Stringers successor as Grand Master. In 1903, he was elected Grand Master, defeating McLeod, and held the office until his death Under his direction, the Grand Lodge became the most progressive of all Negro Masonic Lodges in the country, and at the time of his passing its assets were nearly a million dollars. Peace to his ashes and tranquillity to his soul.



JAMES C. GILLIAM

Mr. Gilliam is Grand Master of the M. W. Stringer Grand Lodge, Prince Hall affiliation, of the Masonic Order. Under his leadership, a million-dollar Masonic Temple was built on Lynch Street in Jackson, Mississippi. The temple contains an auditorium with a seating capacity of 2,500, a cafeteria which can accommodate five hundred people, and four stores. It stands as a monument not only to his brotherhood and his people, but to the knowledge and ability which Mr. Gilliam brought to his position.

THE REVEREND DR. THOMAS W. STRINGER

Dr. Stringer, Canadian by birth, was active in the Underground Railroad. He became the first Grand Master of the Ohio jurisdiction of A. F. A. Masons, and, in 1875, organized the M. W. Stringer Grand Lodge in Mississippi. An organizer of the A. M. E. Mississippi-Louisiana Conference, Dr. Stringer served as pastor of Bethel Church at Vicksburg.

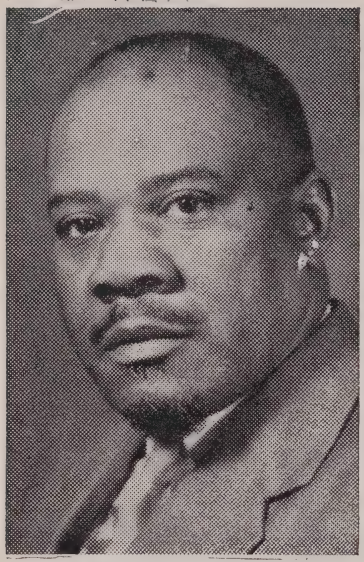
A Republican leader during Reconstruction, he was a friend and associate of Hiram Revel, first Negro senator, and other civic leaders such as B. K. Bruce, James Hill, and John R. Lynch. Dr. Stringer, whose monument stands in Vicksburg Cemetery, remains an inspirational figure to the generations who reap the reward of his untiring work.

BISHOP R. R. WRIGHT, D.D., Ph.D., LL.D

Bishop Wright's career as an educator, teacher, writer, preacher, and businessman has been outstanding. He has been a professor at Payne Seminary and president of Wilberforce University. In 1936, at the General Conference of the A.M.E. Church, in New York City, he was elected bishop. Thereafter, as presiding bishop, he spent four years in South Africa, four years in the West Indies, and four years in the Thirteenth Episcopal District. At present, he is the presiding bishop of the Eighth Episcopal District (Mississippi-Louisiana). He was one of the first Negroes in the United States to be given a Ph.D., and the great Negro encyclopedia, the largest book published in the United States by Negroes, is in large part his achievement. In his service to his church and his race, he has much the same vision as Richard Allen, the founder of the A.M.E. Church and its first bishop. Today, he stands in the top rank among Negro men of accomplishment in the nation.

MOTHER BETHEL A.M.E. CHURCH, VICKSBURG, MISS.

The present edifice was erected under the direction of the writer, the Reverend John J. Morant, in 1912 at a cost of $50,000.



THE REVEREND
JAMES A. THORNTON, D.D.

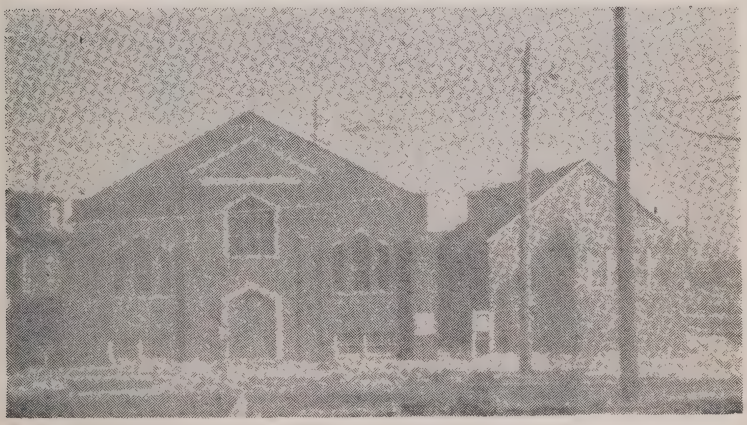
Dr. Thornton is the thirty-first pastor of Bethel A.M.E. Church, Vicksburg, the first A.M.E. church organized in Mississippi. He is in the tenth year of his pastorate, three longer that any pastor who ever served this great congregation. His program has always been a forward-looking one, and through his efforts "Mother Bethel" still towers above all other churches in the state. It was at Bethel that Campbell College was born. Two of its pastors became bishops. In 1912, when this writer was the pastor, the "greater" Bethel building was constructed through the cooperation of the congregation and other members of the community. Dr. Thornton has wrought well despite the migration of members to larger cities, and he has held the fort against many odds.

The following pastors have served this great congregation during the last ninety years:

Rev. Page Tyler, Founder
Rev. J. W. Bowman, 1864
Rev. J. R. Revels, 1865
Rev. Thomas W. Stringer, 1868
Rev. John Allen, 1869-72
Rev. D. Cooper, 1873-75
Rev. Adam Jackson, 1875-78
Rev. J. C. Embry, 1878-79 (Bishop)
Rev. J. I. Lowe, 1880-82
Rev. Carolina, 1883-84
Rev. C. O. H. Thomas, 1885-86
Rev. H. B. Parks, 1887-89 (Bishop)
Rev. W. T. Anderson, 1890-92
Rev. O. P. Ross, 1892-95
Rev. A. J. Russell, 1896-98
Rev. P. Mills, 1899-1900
Rev. G. W. Porter, 1901-05
Rev. J. J. Morant, 1906-12
Rev. E. Wittenburg, 1913-16
Rev. A. L. Murry, 1918-19
Rev. M. C. Wright, 1920
Rev. H. J. Brown, 1921-22
Rev. T. S. J. Pendleton, 1923-27
Rev. S. W. Foster, 1928-29
Rev. J. R. Powe, 1929-32
Rev. T. M. Greene, 1932-35
Rev. J. M. B. Michollo, 1935-39
Rev. I. M. Hunt, 1939-42
Rev. S. L. Greene, Jr., 1942
Rev. G. H. J. Thibodeaux, 1942
Rev. L. P. Pendexter, 1942-47
Rev. J. A. Thornton, 1947-

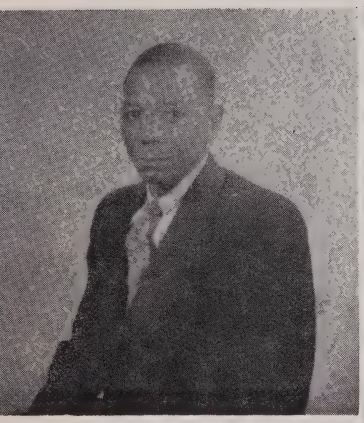
THE REVEREND
WILLIAM H. JENKINS, B.D., D.D.

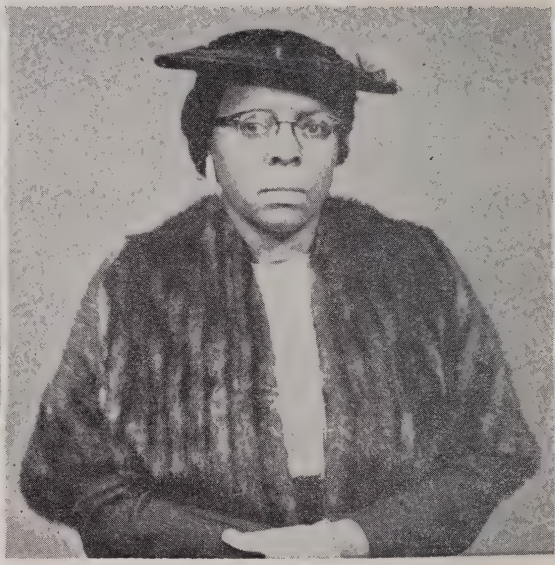
Dr. Jenkins is the pastor of Greater St. Luke's A.M.E. Church, in East Chicago, Indiana. He brought this charge out of of what was called a "chaotic shambles" to a respected place in the community. He also is responsible for a parish house, a parsonage, and a community playground, all the result of the labor of his wife and himself. He has greatly increased the membership and has paid all annual claims. He is secretary of the Chicago Conference of the A.M.E. Church, and was endorsed by that Conference for a bishopric at the General Conference in Miami, Florida, in 1956. He received many votes, but because of what has been described as an injustice he failed of election. He is a man of boundless energy and iron will, and in time he seems certain of elevation to a higher office.



GREATER ST. LUKE'S A.M.E. CHURCH

Shown with Greater St. Luke's A.M.E. Church are the parish house and playground. The whole property, which the Reverend William H. Jenkins developed out of a small charge in East Chicago, Indiana, is now valued at a half million dollars.





THE REVEREND AND
MRS. CLEVELAND DIXON

The Reverend Cleveland Dixon, pastor of the Greater Bethel A.M.E. Church at Oakdale, Louisiana, and his wife, Mrs. Florence Dixon, have done an outstanding job in getting community backing, regardless of race or creed, for their work. The church, one of the finest structures in the community, was built at a cost of twenty-five thousand dollars, and the church property, through the efforts of the Dixons and their staff, has been developed until it is now valued at approximately fifty thousand dollars. The membership has also been greatly increased, and a large number of young people have been awakened to the value of Christian training. Mrs. Dixon has taught for fifteen years in the local public school and is greatly beloved in the community. There is no segregation in the Oakdale church, and relations between the races are cordial and mutually respectful.

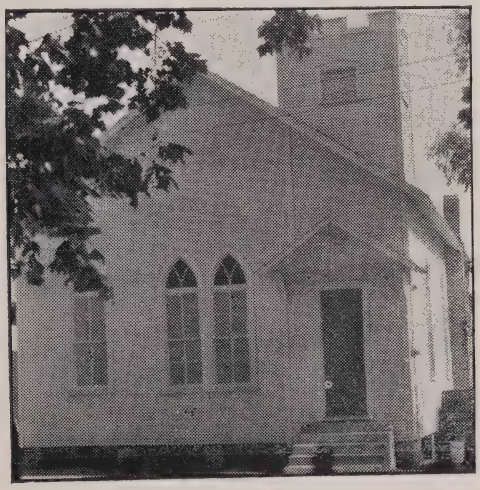
THE CONGREGATION OF GREATER BETHEL A.M.E. CHURCH
The present church building, at Oakdale, Louisiana, was built at a cost of $25,000. Reverend C. H. Dixon is the pastor.

THE REVEREND WILLIAM PORTIS

Dr. Portis is the Presiding Elder of the Jackson District of the A.M.E. Church. He is noted as a builder. Under his leadership the Greater Disney Chapel of the A.M.E. Church at Greenville, Mississippi, was remodeled and repaired at a cost of ten thousand dollars, all of which was paid during the two years of his administration there. Today, Disney is one of the best charges in the A.M.E. Church, with a vastly increased memerbship. Dr. Portis duplicated this feat at Greenwood, Mississippi, where he remodeled Turner Chapel and made many repairs at the parsonage at an over-all cost of twenty thousand dollars. The church is now in a class second to none and its membership has doubled. He was elected to the General Conference of the A.M.E. Church in 1944, 1948, 1952 and 1956.

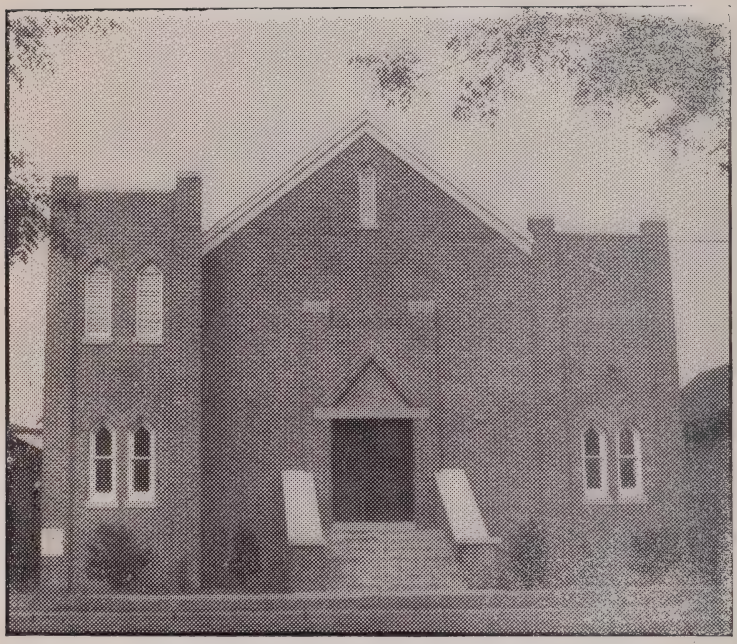
MRS. CECILE PORTIS

Mrs. Portis is the wife of the Reverend William Portis, the noted builder of Turner Chapel, Greenwood, and Greater Disney Chapel, Greenville, Mississippi. She heads the missionary organization of the Eastern Mississippi Conference. She is an ardent worker in the cause of God and all affairs of the A.M.E. Church in Jackson, Mississippi. She is also an indefatigable worker in the causes of her race, and joins with her husband in his civic and political activities.



THE GREATER DISNEY CHAPEL, GREENVILLE, MISS.

This charge of the A.M.E. Church was remodeled during the pastorate of the Reverend William Portis at a cost of $10,000.



TURNER CHAPEL, GREENWOOD, MISS.

This charge of the A.M.E. Church was constructed during the pastorate of the Reverend William Portis, at a cost of 25,000.

THE REVEREND
OLIVER POINDEXTER

MRS. LENA POINDEXTER

The Reverend Oliver Poindexter's greatgrandfather of the same name was a minister in Woodville, Mississippi. The present pastor, however, began his career as a businessman. He was persuaded to enter the ministry by this writer, and from the very beginning his ministerial career was successful. He has served in some of the smallest as well as the best charges in the Mississippi Conference. His outstanding work has been as a builder. He has promoted the building of three parsonages in the last ten years, two at Brookhaven, valued at three thousand dollars each, and one at Hazlehurst, valued at two thousand dollars. He has been twice elected to the General Conference of the A.M.E. Church, and has served several terms as a trustee of Campbell College.

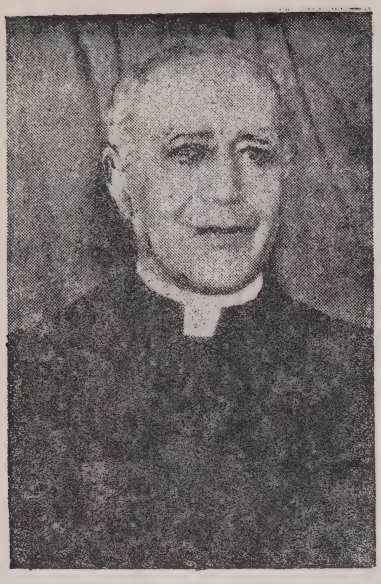
Wife of the Reverend Oliver Poindexter, Mrs. Lena Poindexter is noted as a friend of the needy. The door of her beautiful home in Crystal Springs, Mississippi, is open every day of the year to those who wish comfort and help. Like her kindhearted husband, she is an outstanding example of Christian charity.

THE REVEREND
DR. JOHN JACKSON

Dr. Jackson of Monroe, Louisiana, is virtually one of the patriarchs of the Louisiana ministry of the A.M.E. Church. He became a member of the North Louisiana Conference in 1902, during the administration of Bishop Charles Spenser Smith. He was ordained in 1906 by Bishop Moses B. Salter. He was a member of the General Conference of the A.M.E. Church from 1912 to 1956, and he has been a Presiding Elder for the past twenty-six years. Dr. Jackson has served as pastor from "Rabbit Holler" to the foremost charges of the North Louisiana Conference and has never had to explain a failure.

ISAIAH THORNTON MONTGOMERY

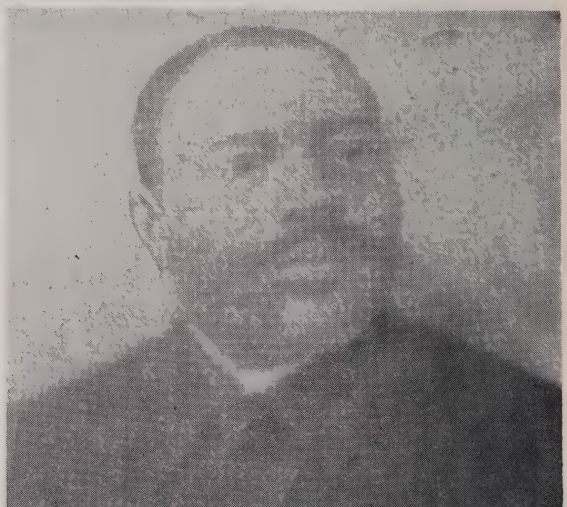
Dr. Montgomery was the founder of Mound Bayou, Mississippi, the first all-Negro town in the United States, and the second president of Campbell College, in Jackson. Through his enterprise, a one thousand-acre tract of land in Mound Bayou was obtained for Campbell College, which, since its development into a farming project, is now valued at a half million dollars. At one time, Dr. Montgomery was secretary to Joseph Davis, the brother of Jefferson Davis, the first and only president of the Confederacy. His humanitarian ideas were far in advance of his time, and his address at the Mississippi Constitutional Convention, in 1890, was sharply criticized because of these views. He was an indefatigable worker for his race, a fine statesman, and a great Christian leader, and at his death at the age of seventy-seven, in 1924, he was mourned throughout the country.



THE REVEREND H. ELIJAH STEWART

Dr. Stewart was a classmate of the author's at Wilberforce University. He was a great spiritual force in the A.M.E. Church, and influential in shaping the pattern of the Payneites. His sons are carrying on his labors in the Master's vineyard.

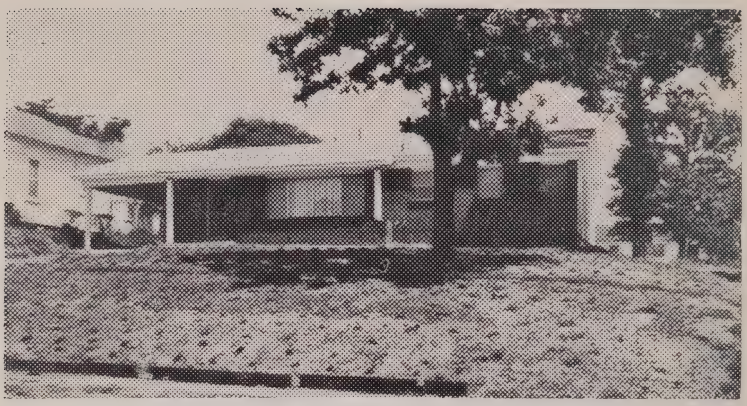
Dr. Brown was a pioneer in the North Mississippi Conference of the A.M.E. Church. He was a unique character, an unusual personality, who was greatly loved by young people. They called him "King David" Brown. He was noted for his twenty-minute sermons, which were most effective. Self-taught, his eloquence was matched by few preachers of his day. His elder son Charles and the Reverend E. R. Carter's son John were the first young men from the A.M.E. Church in Mississippi to attend Wilberforce University. His daughter, Mrs. Willie F. Wilson, is one of the most active members of the Greater Powell A.M.E. Church in Grenada, Mississippi. When the writer was young, Dr. Brown took a great interest in him and recommended that the Conference admit him to its membership. His death was mourned by the entire A.M.E. Church.



THE REVEREND
K. D. Brown

DR. LEVI J. ROWAN

Dr. Rowan was elected to two terms as president of Alcorn College, Alcorn, Mississippi. During the depression of the 1930's, when the college's finances were at a low ebb, he kept the institution functioning by giving his word as credit that its debts would be paid. He was conservative yet realistic, religious but not emotional, an ardent worker for Negro rights but not radical. When he passed, he left behind little of this world's goods, but he bequeathed an inspiring record of service. Dr. Rowan's widow is a respected and beloved resident of Vicksburg, Mississipi.



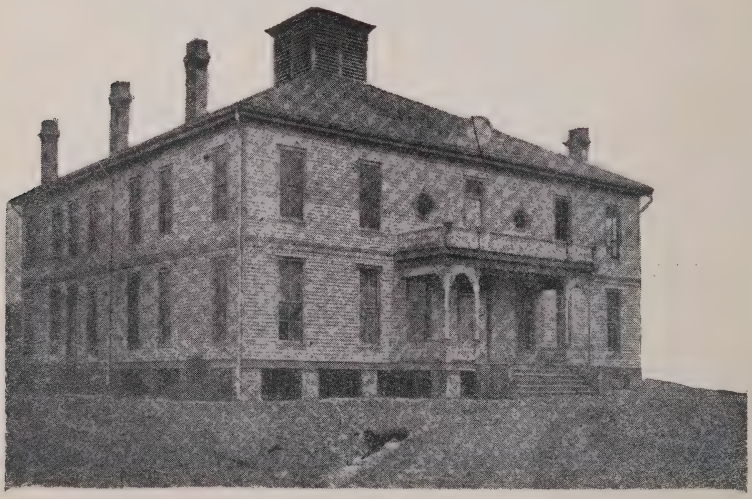
PARSONAGE OF GREATER ST. MATTHEW'S, SHREVEPORT, LA.

Under the leadership of the Reverend David J. Brown, a $20,000 parsonage has been built for Greater St. Matthew's A.M.E. Church, Shreveport, and a city nursery has been organized. Dr. Brown, a graduate of Campbell College, is still a young man, and his work should be an inspiration to all young ministers.

FIRST CAMPBELL COLLEGE BUILDING, JACKSON, MISS.

Campbell College was established in the above building in 1897, after it was moved from Vicksburg, where it was founded in 1890. The two-story wooden structure was destroyed by fire in 1901.

The Reverends Thomas W. Stringer, E. W. Lampton, L. M. Mitchell, W. R. Carson, K. D. Brown, F. R. Carter, W. H. Coleman, and J. G. Johnson; Drs. L. W. W. Manaway, W. T. Anderson, and J. W. Watson; the Honorable I. T. Montgomery, the Honorable H. T. Risher, Professor W. H. Reynolds, Granville Carter, and Thomas Richardson were the founders.



THE FIRST BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF CAMPBELL COLLEGE

PROFESSOR DANIEL HUNTER BUTLER, D.D.
Third President of Campbell College

CAMPBELL COLLEGE, JACKSON, MISS.

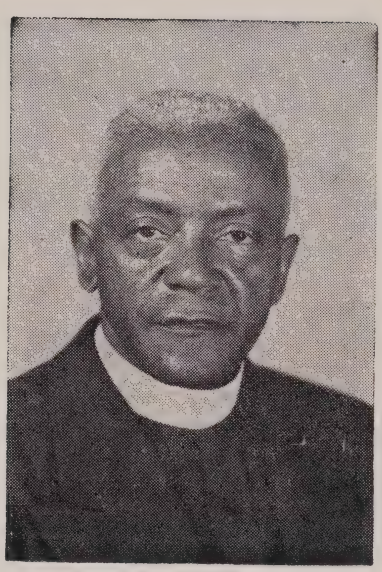
Greater Campbell College, at Jackson, as it is today. It was constructed at a cost of $100,000. The present chancellor is Bishop R. R. Wright, and the president is Dr. W. P. Wilber.

THE REVEREND
R. A. SCOTT, B.D., D.D.

Dr. Scott was born in Raymond, Mississippi, and educated at J.P. Campbell College. He later became president of the college, serving for eight years. He has also been pastor of Zion Chapel, A.M.E. Church, at Natchez, pastor for six years of St. Peter's A.M.E. Church, at Port Gibson, and from 1912 to 1921 a staff officer of the International Sunday School Association. At present, Dr. Scott is the Presiding Elder of the Port Gibson District of the Mississippi Conference. In 1931, he was an honored delegate to the Ecumenical Conference at Atlanta, Georgia. He is devoted to the interests of his race, especially in the fields of economics and politics, and a stanch member of the Republican party.

THE REVEREND LOUIS VINCENT, B.D.

Dr. Vincent has a long record of service to the A.M.E. Church to his credit. He is a graduate of Turner Theological Seminary and Morris Brown College, Atlanta, Georgia. He also studied at Northwestern University, Chicago. He is a master of the classics and a journalist of note. For eight years he was dean of the Lampton School of Religion at Campbell College, and has been a successful pastor for more than twenty years. He is always in the thick of the battle against ignorance and sin.



THE REVEREND SAMPSON W. FOSTER, B.D.

The Reverend Foster was born December 31, 1893, at Vicksburg. He attended the Vicksburg public schools and was graduated from Vicksburg High School. During these years he was nurtured in Bethel A.M.E. Church, Vicksburg, when the writer was pastor. In 1916, he was graduated from Lampton Theological Seminary, Campbell College, in Jackson. He was a successful pastor in A.M.E. Conferences for eight years. Later, he became a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church. At present, he is priest-in-charge of the Church of the Redeemer, Greenville; St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Columbus; St. Bernard Episcopal Church, Okolona; and chaplain of Okolona College. All these parishes are in Mississippi. He is also Dean of the Diocese of Mississippi Convocation. The Reverend Foster is editor of the *Signal* magazine, and the author of the following books: *Greek Grammar for Beginners, Hebrew Grammar for Beginners, Food for Sermons,* and *Training for Service,* volumes I and II.

resting place is his earthen house in Greenwood Colored Cemetery. There are many good white persons in Mississippi. I owe my life to one, a white Methodist preacher. There are good and bad among us and among them. We must let the wheat and tares grow together until another day, when the Negro and the white man better understand each other, and learn that both Negroes and white men are giving the world a great headache. Will these problems be solved? Here is a recent remedy for our national ills: a teaspoonful of Christian love; two teaspoonsful of good will, three teaspoonsful of common sense; and four teaspoonsful of humanity. Shake well and take three times a day. This will cure our present-day problems.

In Despair, With None to Help But the Lord

The unfortunate occurrence at Greenwood, Mississippi, caused me to lose an investment that would have been worth ten thousand dollars in ten years. But I left Greenwood with only a few dollars. Bishop Tyree and the presiding elders of the Mississippi Conference were afraid to place me as an exchange, and I was left to "root hog or die." I thought then, and I think now, that when an individual is right in the common affairs of life, fear is his worst enemy. Jesus Christ was fearless and right.

I lived more or less at random for eight months, not knowing what to do, but I read from the Book (Psalms 30:5) that "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

The North Mississippi Annual Conference was to convene at Friars' Point, and as a member I aspired to tthe secretaryship. This took some boldness for the Bishop and the Presiding Elders knew that I had nothing to offer by way of service for that year, while there were others in more favorable spots than I who could occupy the position with credit. But when the battle was over, I won out over two

able competitors. That, in those days, gave a secretary great prestige.

Another shock was a mission appointment, but Bishop Tyree said, "You go ahead, Brother Morant. This appointment is the biggest in African Methodism in Mississippi. This is my appointment, with great hopes." With unconcealed tears I gladly accepted the appointment, with a boundless ambition to triumph over every foe.

My Miraculous Accomplishment for God and the Church at Rosedale

For twenty years, special efforts had been made to increase the congregation in Rosedale, Mississippi, and to construct a respectable church edifice there, but all efforts had failed, and it had begun to seem an impossible thing to do. With but a few members, in ten months several thousand dollars were raised, and by the time the Conference convened there a five-thousand-dollar edifice had been completed and the membership had increased from fifteen to one hundred and two. The reports were from twenty-five dollars to one hundred and fifty dollars for conference claims.

Saying nothing about the cost of the building, which was paid in full, our Conference report was more than satisfactory. After a two-year pastorate that charge ranked number one in that Conference, and Bishop Tyree said that it was hardly believable that such an accomplishment could have been obtained in such a short period of time. I received no financial aid, for all things belong to God.

Elected Delegate to the General Conference and Made Pastor of St. Matthew's Church, Greenville

My two years' pastorate at St. Matthew's in Greenville was phenomenal. The Oklahoma fever was rampant from 1904 to 1906, and many of our best members migrated to

that territory of oil and freedom. The Reverend Dr. Adam Jackson, my predecessor, reported ninety members and ninety dollars in Conference claims. After two years, I reported 250 members and $250 in Conference claims, and rebuilt a four-room parsonage with cash payments. St. Matthew's became a rival both to Zion Chapel, Natchez, and Bethel, at Vicksburg. Bishop Moses B. Salter, the presiding Bishop, was petitioned by the officers of Bethel, Vicksburg, to send them a pastor who was a builder, and he selected me to do the job.

Bethel Church, in Vicksburg, was the mother of African Methodism in Mississippi. Since 1864 it had the distinction of having the most able-minded ministers of the A.M.E. connection, but for fifty years these ministers were from other states. Ministers from Mississippi were nonacceptable, owing to the prevailing idea that Mississippi ministers of the A.M.E. Church were inefficiently trained. Therefore my appointment was an unusual experience.

The Reverend R. G. W. Porter, of Tennessee, had been the pastor of Bethel for five years, and was very successful, but he returned to the Tennessee Conference to take charge of Mother Avery Church, in Memphis. The Bishop appointed me pastor of Bethel from the North Mississippi Conference in order to override the prejudice against home-state ministers. Therefore, on the second Sunday morning, in January 1905, when I filled the pulpit of Bethel A.M.E. Church, the congregation was plainly surprised. I was reared just four miles away in the community of Vicksburg, and ordinarily a prophet has not much honor in his own community or country.

The old Bethel building, like Zion Chapel, was a relic of the white slave-owners, and had once been a Presbyterian church. It had been remodeled during the pastorate of the Reverend Dr. J. I. Lowe, a man among men. It was stately and had a cathedral-like appearance, but it was in need of repair.

There were only ninety dollars in the treasury, but the membership was around four hundred. It was useless to speak of repairs. It was a common saying that money had been raised during the last forty years for rebuilding or repairs but no one could tell how much.

My first object was to spiritualize both Bethel Church and the community, and for two years I labored to that end. As a result, nearly one hundred souls were converted and added to Bethel. And this was my bridgehead.

My first undertaking to mold sentiment for a new church building fell on deaf ears, but I would not consent to a program for repairs. I insisted that to repair a house of that size was like patching an old garment with new cloth. On the other hand a new building of our own would mean something. It would tell the world of our moral, religious, and intellectual worth as a race of people.

Then, after a few years of inculcation, we struck the iron while it was red hot. The vote was five hundred and thirty-five for a new building and only forty against, but before the vote was called for I had the president of the First National Bank to appear before the congregation and read our bank deposits and give our balance, which amounted to five thousand dollars. At the same time, the president of the bank promised that if the church would raise another five thousand dollars his bank would lend Bethel ten thousand dollars if we meant to build. This was during the depression, and after we increased our bank balance to seven thousand dollars, the congregation could not raise any more money. However, like the man from Missouri, they wanted to see something for their money. I sold some property I had bought at Greenville, and lent the church three thousand dollars. This amount increased Bethel's cash balance in the First National Bank to eleven thousand dollars. Then, in accordance with the promise the bank president made, we obtained a ten-year loan of ten thousand dollars, bringing our credit to more than twenty thousand dollars. The old Bethel Hall,

the first dormitory of J. P. Campbell College, and the church parsonage were mortgaged for the ten-year loan.

Then seven or eight other members and I gave cash bonds for ten thousand dollars, which gave the church a total credit of thirty-one thousand dollars. The contract was let, and eight months afterward the Greater Bethel Church was completed, with a balance due of exactly $10,000. This debt was paid before I was taken from Bethel to the presiding eldership. Thus the old story that church builders create big debts and other ministers pay them is not always true. For Bethel was completed and all floating debts retired with all the insurance for three years paid, and only ten thousand dollars left on mortgage, payable in ten years.

A few years after the church was built, Bethel Hall burned down, and from the insurance the church received three thousand dollars, which reduced the mortgage to about five thousand dollars. Today that building is valued at one hundred thousand dollars. That is my monument given to God. Amen.

Bishop Connor and Dr. Vernon Consecrate Bethel

Some thirty members of the congregation who were opposed to the building program and who left, now returned. Bishop J. M. Connor preached the consecration sermon on October 12, 1912. Dr. W. J. Vernon, then president of Campbell College, delivered the address on Monday night and collected on that occasion two thousand dollars. Reported that year was a total of $750, over-all general claims, a membership of 650, including probationers, and a Sunday school enrollment of 400.

Appointed Presiding Elder

I was the first A.M.E. pastor who remained in the same pastorate for as long as seven years. After seven years of

service, Bishop Connor appointed me presiding elder of the Vicksburg District of the Central Mississippi Conference. Then, for twenty-six years, I presided over Vicksburg, Glen Allen, Natchez, Port Gibson, and Brookhaven districts, and never had to make an excuse about my District Reports, by the grace of God.

Failure of the Three-Million-Dollar Drive

Some five thousand dollars was raised on the three-million-dollar drive, but it was unwisely allocated. The drive was a Protestant world-wide movement, but it failed. The children of light must yet learn lessons from the children of Mammon, as the Master admonished. The A.M.E. Church should have raised at least a million-dollar reserve fund, but as long as we proceed in our humdrum way, we will be always lagging behind. We have a rich heritage, but we must learn the wisdom of having an adequate reserve, so that when the days of tribulation come, we can draw on what we have put away. The fathers laid the foundation of a great temple and our constituents have enough and some to spare, but we do not seem to be up to our task. We should work together and do great things. While we are getting thousands for kingdom building, we should also give millions for God's purposes, for we are all His, and all belongs to him.

Drafted as Dean of the E. W. Lampton Theological Seminary.

I was elected leader of the North Mississippi Conference without opposition and transferred from the Conference of Mississippi. Bishop S. L. Greene had great confidence in me, and he knew that when he wanted a hard job accomplished, he had only to command me. I had been injured in an automobile accident in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1943, and seven months later I became deathly ill, almost beyond

hope. I could not attend General Conference, in 1944, at Philadelphia. The North Mississippi Conference had been in a terrible slump, but after four years it was making an almost unbelievable comeback of about fifty per cent, both in membership, new churches, and finances. I was unanimously endorsed for the bishopric, but after my serious illness Bishop Greene urged me to accept the deanship of the E. W. Lampton Theological Seminary's School of Religion. Finally realizing that my physical strength had begun to wane, I accepted the deanship with blinding tears, for I wanted to stay on the firing line. However, it was the best thing that could have happened for my personal good, both from a spiritual and physical point of view, to say nothing of the intellectual stimulus it provided. My intellectual powers were reinvigorated so that my experience as an instructor gave me new life.

Bishop Primm and another bishop offered me better-paid positions, but I had already adapted myself to my position as I can adapt myself to any position that I am qualified to fill. I wanted to hang on as a pastor, for I loved the pastorate. When appointed presiding elder, I made one of the foremost presiding elders, and as a dean my success was as it had been in other fields.

From 1945 to 1954 I taught thirty-five ministers and missionaries. During that time, twenty ministers were graduated from the Department of the School of Religion with Bachelor of Theology degrees and a few with the degree of Bachelor of Divinity. Some fifteen received the honorary Doctor of Divinity degree. The church is asleep at the crossing when it comes to ministerial training. While a minister can do well untrained, he can do much better work when trained. One trained man, Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne, in his day did more than any four or five untrained bishops. His mantle has fallen on the entire African Methodist Episcopal Church in its support of A.M.E. schools. Even now, two thirds of our ministry do not fully realize the good effect

of a well-trained ministry, but the spirit of Bishop Payne still lives, for the ministry of the A.M.E. Church now has a greater number of trained ministers than all the other sister denominations of our groups, and yet we are just beginners in regard to the need.

I filled the chairs of languages and cognate branches of theology in the School of Religion, which Bishop Primm has made into a ranking seminary.

Reminiscences and Personal Experiences

The Proof of Living Human Spirits

When I was a child of two, my Uncle Simon used to play with me daily, but he had died early. A day or two after his death, I awoke one morning before my parents and saw Uncle Simon sitting by the fire in a chair with his head dressed in grave clothing, which I had never had an opportunity of observing before. I became very, very frightened and screamed at the top of my voice, telling what I had seen. Again, I saw him some weeks afterward, attempting to play with me. I screamed again, and my father came to meet me as I was passing through a plum thicket. Crying loudly, and looking back, I told him that Uncle Simon was trying to keep me from coming back to bring him a little bucket of water. Then my father moved to another place and then to Mississippi. *This is the whole truth.*

The Second Vision of the Dead at Shaw, Mississippi.

I was with the Reverend H. L. Lewis, about twelve o'clock one night in the home of Mrs. Mason, the mother of the Reverend Eugene Mason. We were in bed in the upper story of the house when a man of small stature appeared at the foot of the bed and made a slight noise. I awoke and said

to the Reverend Lewis, "Look at that man." The Reverend Lewis became frightened and said loudly, "What is that?" The next morning, the lady of the house asked what the trouble had been, for she had heard the loud voices. Then I explained the scene. "A small man with bushy hair, mustache, and large eyes appeared." Mrs. Mason said, "That was my husband who died in that room just five months ago."

The Third Scene

The Reverend H. C. Bruce and I were walking on a moonlit night. We came to a tree near a branch of water, and I called his attention to a man standing at attention like a soldier. The Reverend Bruce got a bit excited and both of us quickened our steps. The next day we were informed that during the Civil War a rebel soldier who was on guard was shot to death at that spot by one of General Sherman's soldiers as the army was approaching Vicksburg.

The Fourth Scene

When I was pastor at Bethel, Vicksburg, I was thirty-four years old. One night when I was alone, my family being away in the mountains of Kentucky for their health, a nurse entered my room at twelve with a little candle. I heard the door open and saw at once that it was unnatural. I arose and pointed a .38 special at the apparition, and spoke abusively. The woman disappeared at once. The next day Sister Crump, a lady who had worked around the parsonage for many years, said, after I had explained the appearance of the woman, "That was Miss Dora. She died in that room some six years ago. She was a guest of the Reverend Dr. O. P. Ross."

The Fifth Scene

At Lorman, Mississippi, in 1935, where I was presiding over the Port Gibson District, the Reverend L. A. Carpenter, who is now presiding over the Natchez District, and I were in bed when about midnight a woman came to the bed and looked us both in the face. Then she noiselessly walked out of the room. The next day we learned that the mother of the house had died there. She was Mrs. Gains, the wife of Brother Gains, who was steward of that little mission at Lorman. To this the Reverend Carpenter will testify today. Human spirits do live today (Mark 9:4-8: "They saw Jesus only.")

Five Times in the Valley of Death, But Fearless

1. When nine years of age, I had already learned to swim, but on one occasion I ventured too far out in the Yazoo River. I became tired and thought I could stand on the bottom. Instead, I sank into a deep hole and went down the second time. My brother rescued me as I came up. He was a great swimmer. He looked at me for many minutes. My recovery impressed him so much, he said, that he had to become a Christian. Since I was wonderfully rescued from a watery grave, he had to believe in God.

2. My younger brother, Anthony, was burned to death in a cotton gin house, after I leaped to safety from a second story window. I was divinely plucked from a fiery furnace, which forced me to believe that I was called to the Christian ministry. I had shirked the task for four years, ashamed to take up the cross because young people were critical of church activities and questioned the ministerial calling of a teen-ager to preach the Gospel.

3. Less than two years after my escape from the conflagration, I was accidently shot down. The bullet lodged

just below my heart. It happened because I was tardy arriving at prayer service on Sunday night. My class leader and pastor, after a year, realized that I was called to preach the Gospel, and without my consent I was appointed to preach on a Tuesday night. Then the die was cast and nothing could move me. From that night until this day I have preached Jesus Christ, who was crucified for our sins and raised for our justification.

4. At Greenwood, Mississippi in 1901, I was saved from death by the grace of God, a white methodist minister, a desperate white man, and Major J. K. Vadaman. I was frightened, for I had not committed any crime and a bad white man asked what evil I had done. An angel from heaven called three times from a cotton treetop, as I was walking into the valley of death. I refused to answer for I was angry by that time and ready to die. Then again this voice from the treetop called "John Morant." I looked up but saw no one. However, a voice said, "Don't go that way. Turn this way." The Reverend B. G. Shaw, who was with me, and I turned to the right and walked thirty-five miles to safety through divine guidance. Until then I was prejudiced against the white people of the South, having been educated since my teens at Wilberforce University, in Ohio. But from that day I realized that there are good and bad among both white and colored peoples. God is not a respecter of color. Whatever a person's nation or race, if he loves God and worketh righteousness he is accepted by Him.

5. At Vicksburg, during my pastorate at Bethel Church, I narrowly escaped being crushed to death by a running elevator as I was looking up to call attention to the fact that the elevator doors were open. A white German snatched me away as the five-thousand-pound elevator came down, scraping my forehead. An eighth of an inch more would have ended my life, for I would have been knocked off balance and fallen forty feet. This escape frightened me. After

that I knew I was to build Bethel, which until then was an undecided question. Great is the Lord and greatly to be served.

In 1908, the General Conference of the A.M.E. Church convened at Norfolk, Virginia. I was appointed teller, representing the Eighth Episcopal District, with special instructions from the Reverend Dr. E. W. Lampton, because many of the old guard, like the conspirators against Julius Caesar, conceived that he, Dr. Lampton, if elected Bishop, would eclipse all others from the Eighth District.

Drs. Lampton, J. S. Fliper, and H. Blanton Parks were all nearly elected on the first ballot. Dr. Lampton led, lacking only one and one-third votes. On the second ballot, Drs. Lampton, Flipper, and Parks were elected. The Reverends J. Albert Johnson and W. H. Heard were elected on the second ballot as special presiding bishops for an eight-year term for service in Africa.

Bishop Lampton died after two years service in the Eighth Episcopal District of Mississippi and Louisiana.

PART II

THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN MISSISSIPPI AND LOUISIANA

The African Methodist Episcopal Church in Mississippi was organized in January, 1864, at Vicksburg, Mississippi, by the Reverend Page Tyler, a missionary from Indiana. A congregation was already in existence at Vicksburg, but it was under white Methodist direction. A majority of the members accepted the preaching of the Reverend Tyler. He then organized the A.M.E. Church and named it Bethel after the mother church in Philadelphia. The old building at Monroe and First Streets that his congregation purchased in the 1860's from the Presbyterians was remodeled in 1882, when the Reverend J. T. Lowe was pastor.

The Reverend Dr. T. W. Stringer, a freeman from Canada, was first pastor of Bethel. He brought the A.M.E. discipline and a Masonic ritual. Not only was he a pioneer in the A.M.E. Church and Freemasonry in Mississippi, he also was a political leader of the freemen under the Republican party standard.

The Reverend John Bowman was the first local pastor. He and Dr. Stringer both became noted pastors of Bethel. The Reverend Drs. J. C. Embry, J. Lowe, Frances Carolina, C. O. H. Thomas, H. B. Parks, W. T. Anderson, O. P. Ross, G. P. Porter, A. J. Russell and P. E. Mills were some of the other illustrious pastors of Bethel in the early days of the A.M.E. Church in Mississippi.

Among the pastors of later days were the Reverends J. A. Thornton, T. M. Greene, and G. H. J. Thibodeaux.

The Present Greater Bethel Church

In 1906, the writer was commissioned by Bishop Moses B. Salter for the express purpose of erecting a church that would be in keeping with such a great congregation. At first, the task imposed seemed impossible. However, after seven years a great building was completed. This was done at a cost of one hundred thousand dollars, ninety thousand dollars of which was raised during the pastorate of the writer.

Zion Chapel A.M.E. Church, Natchez, Mississippi

During the 1860's, when the states were at war, a group of colored people at Natchez, Mississippi worshiped under the auspices of the Methodist Episcopal and Presbyterian churches (white). After organizing Bethel, at Vicksburg, the Reverend Tyler went to Natchez, where he brought the second Negro church into being and named it Zion Chapel. This was in 1865. Bethel at Vicksburg, and Zion Chapel, at Natchez, mark the beginnings of worship by exclusively Negro congregations in Mississippi.

Hiram Revel, the first Negro elected to the Senate of the United States, was pastor of Zion Chapel A.M.E. Church, Natchez, when he was thus honored. John R. Lynch was a member of Zion Chapel when he was elected to the United States Congress, and he was the first Negro to preside in the opening session of a Republican National Convention. Attorney Lewis Winston was also a member of Zion. He was chancery clerk of Adams County, Mississippi.

St. Peter's A.M.E. Church, Port Gibson, Mississippi

St. Peter's A.M.E. Church was built in 1868. It stands at the gateway of the Street of Churches in the historic Mississippi town of Port Gibson. It has always been known as one of the most progressive congregations in the state.

During Reconstruction days, Professor Thomas Richardson, the postmaster, and Mr. Bland, the county sheriff (for four years), were outstanding members of St. Peter's. Today, St. Peter's is pastored by Dr. R. A. Scott.

St. Matthew's A.M.E. Church, Greenville, Mississippi

St. Matthew's, in Greenville, was the fourth congregation of African Methodist Episcopalians organized in Mississippi. It is located on the bank of the Mississippi River and was the first of our churches in the rich Delta region. From this church the great Edward W. Lampton was elected Bishop and financial secretary in 1908. The School of Religion at Campbell College is named in his honor. The light of African Methodism cast by this church in the Mississippi Delta region has been a guide for the community for many years. The torch of religion still burns brightly under the leadership of the Reverend G. R. Haughton.

Pearl Street, A.M.E. Church, Jackson, Mississippi

The Reverend G. W. Bryant was one of the first pastors of the Pearl Street A.M.E. Church, in Jackson. During Reconstruction days, people of both races came by the thousand to hear his matchless oratory. The Reverend J. W. Hair, through his untiring efforts lifted this church to its present height as one of the greatest institutions in the city of Jackson. Many outstanding pastors have served in this great church, among them the Reverends J. R. Powe, C. M. Hayden, J. H. Jennings, and R. K. Young. The Reverend Robert M. Stevens is the present pastor.

The Honorable James Hill, former Secretary of State and United States Postmaster, and S. W. Miller, state committeeman of the Black and Tan Republican Party, are two of the many outstanding laymen who were members of this first church of the Jackson District.

Friendship A.M.E. Church, Clarksdale, Mississippi

Friendship A.M.E. Church is one of the landmarks of Clarksdale. This congregation has, over the years, been a pride to the state. Its members have always stressed in their activities the virtue of friendship, the name their church bears. This outstanding church is now under the leadership of the Reverend R. C. Perry. Outstanding laymen who have taken a prominent part in bringing Friendship Church to its present eminence include George Oliver, G. W. Williams, Sr., and J. C. Gilliam, the Grand Master of the M. W. Stringer Grand Lodge of the A. F. A. M., Prince Hall Affiliation. Dr. Martin, the present pastor, has been highly successful in maintaining its reputation.

Turner Chapel A.M.E. Church, Greenwood, Mississippi

This great church at Greenwood, which was organized in 1889, was rescued from the sheriff's hammer by the herculean efforts of this writer in 1901. Among many worthy pastors who have served the great congregation of Turner Chapel may be mentioned C. M. Hayden, C. D. Hayden, L. P. Poindexter, W. L. Mozee, and its present pastor, L. A. Clark. The Reverend W. M. Portis, now Presiding Elder of the Meridian District, labored here night and day. He designed and remodeled this church into a thing of beauty, and as it stands today it is a monument to his memory.

St. James A.M.E. Church, Meridian, Mississippi

St. James', in Meridian, was established in the 1880's by the hard labor of the Reverend J. W. Watson and other great lights of that period. The Reverend Drs. Davis, S. P. Washington, S. A. Collins, the late N. L. Jeltes, all former pastors, and the present pastor, W. L. Jones, have proved themselves highly competent in enhancing the reputation of

the church. In addition, the Reverend Jones has shown great talent as a builder, for St. James' is a thing of beauty. Under his direction, the reconstruction work was carried out and it is now a truly noble edifice. Also to his credit is the building at Rosedale, Mississippi. The former church, constructed under the pastorate of this writer, burned down in 1935. A greater building has been erected upon the ashes under the leadership of Dr. Jones.

Powell Chapel, Grenada, Mississippi

The original Powell Chapel, in Grenada, was the pastorate of one of God's noblemen, the Reverend Dr. K. D. Brown, of sacred memory. A few years ago, the Reverend Dr. I. H. McInnis made a new Powell Chapel, second to none. This writer was ordained there in October 1955 by Bishop Primm, who commissioned him to lead the congregation out of confusion, which was almost miraculously accomplished in thirty days.

These great churches, strategically located throughout the state, are under the divine guidance of missionary-minded men of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The members of our church have played a major role, over the years, in the religious, social, political, educational, and commercial development of the great state of Mississippi.

Bishops Who Have Presided in Mississippi

Bishop A. Shorter, Wilberforce, Ohio	1866
Bishop J. Pitt Campbell, Phila., Pa.	1874
Bishop T. M. D. Ward	1886
Bishop R. R. Disney	1888-89
Bishop B. T. Tanner	1891
Bishop B. W. Arnette	1892-93
Bishop H. M. Turner	1894-95; 1910-12
Bishop W. B. Derrick	1896-99

Bishop Evans Tryee	1900-04
Bishop M. B. Salters	1904-08
Bishop J. M. Connor	1912-16
Bishop W. H. Heard	1916-20; 1926-28
Bishop W. W. Beckett	1920-26
Bishop E. J. Carey	1926-28
Bishop W. D. Johnson	1928-32
Bishop S. D. Greene	1932-36; 1940-48
Bishop M. H. Davis	1948-52
Bishop Carey A. Gibbs	1952-
Bishop H. Thomas Primm	1953

Organization of Conferences in Mississippi

Mississippi Conference, Vicksburg	1886
North Mississippi Conference, Coldwater	1874
Central Mississippi Conference, Yazoo City	1892
East Mississippi Conference, Jackson	1909
Northeast Mississippi Conference, Aberdeen	1914
Northwest Mississippi Conference, Shelby	1912

The Pioneer Trail Blazers

The Reverend Dr. Thomas W. Stringer, M.D., D.D., was the organizer of the M. W. Stringer Grand Lodge, A.F.A.A., of the Masonic Order, with Prince Hall Affiliation. This lodge now has a membership of approximately thirty-seven thousand. It also has nearly a quarter of a million dollars on hand for the building of a Masonic Temple at Jackson, Mississippi. Dr. Stringer was the first Grand Master of Canada and Ohio, and a trail blazer for the Republican Party in Mississippi. Associated with him were B. K. Bruce, John R. Lynch, James Hill, I. T. Montgomery, Wesley Grayton, and E. W. Lampton. Among his followers were the Reverends E. R. Carter, L. M. Mitchell, J. W. Watson, J. G. Johnson, M. B. Baily, O. A. Douglas, W. H. Newman, H. C. Brace, John Miller, L. W. W.

Mannaway, Adam Jackson, Albert and Steve Jackson, P. O. Fisher, W. M. Singleton, S. P. Felter and J. Jones.

The Old Guard

These men included the Reverends E. R. Carter, J. W. Watson, O. A. Douglas, O. W. Chiles, K. D. Brown, M. B. Bailey, L. M. Michel, E. W. Lampton, W. F. Dangerfield, S. W. White, M. M. Mayo, W. L. Adkins, Brock, C. M. Hayden, Peter Forbus, J. G. Thompson, H. M. Foley, E. E. Goodwin, H. D. Hardy, E. L. McCain, R. C. Hobrock, S. R. Andrews, O. M. C. Tolesson, J. B. Thornton, C. S. Jones, J. H. D. Roberson, John Jones.

The Last of the Old Guard

These include the Reverends John J. Morant, D. R. Morant, M. R. Dixon, J. W. Hair, S. S. Stephens, T. S. J. Pendleton, William E. Barnes, and C. S. Scrivens, William Holmes, S. R. Perry, J. A. Carew and W. M. Brown.

The Third Line of Young Guards

Among these men are the Reverends R. A. Scott, J. A. Thornton, G. R. Haughton, M. E. Johnson, O. Poindexter, R. M. Stevens, W. L. Jones, I. H. McInnis, J. W. Watkins, J. D. Durr, C. E. Powers, C. B. Brantley, E. W. Mansome, A. T. Ward, G. C. Borum, G. W. Roberson, W. L. Wright, J. R. Powe and J. C. Woodard.

Present Presiding Elders

The present Presiding Elders are the Reverends J. D. Watkins, L. A. Carpenter, J. Powe, R. A. Scott, J. W. Hair, W. M. Portis, J. C. Woodard, C. B. Brantley, T. A. Simmons, C. F. Johnson, J. H. Hall, C. W. Myles and William

E. Barnes, G. L. Stimson, William Portis, Jackson, T. H. J. Thibodeaux, J. W. Woodkins, C. T. Powers.

The Episcopal Residence, New Orleans, Louisiana

The Episcopal Residence in New Orleans is one of the best equipped and best situated Residences of the Connection. The Eighth Episcopal District, under the leadership of the dynamic Bishop Carey A. Gibbs, is alert to every responsibility and outstanding in taking the initiative in every constructive enterprise. "Forward March!" is the command of the day.

The Organization of the Louisiana Conference at the Missouri Conference

The Missouri Conference assembled in St. James' Chapel, New Orleans, on October 20, 1865. On November 20, a month later, the Louisiana Conference was organized at a session of the Missouri Conference. Bishop J. P. Campbell was the presiding bishop. The personnel of the two conferences was almost the same, but the Louisiana Conference had a larger representation of African Methodist Episcopal ministers from the southern parts of Missouri and Arkansas. The Reverend J. W. Earley, a missionary from the Indian Conference of the A.M.E. Church, was the prime mover in organizing of the Louisiana Conference.

As early as the late 1830's and the 1840's the Reverend Earley began talking about organizing a Louisiana Conference. He was the leading spirit in obtaing a charter from the Louisiana legislature that gave the free people of New Orleans the right to organize a church. Out of this grew the first Negro church of note in New Orleans, the church that has developed into the great St. James' A.M.E. Church of today.

Before the Louisiana Conference was organized, the Reverend Dr. John M. Brown was sent to New Orleans. He was

either the first A.M.E. pastor of St. James', or among the first. History records that Dr. Brown, while pastor of this historic church, was arrested and put in jail. A conspiracy by proslavery groups of white people, aided by the treachery of his own kith and kin, was responsible for his incarceration. He battled for three years and finally won out.

It is said that the Reverend James A. Handy who also preached as pastor of St. James', was hampered like Dr. Brown, but he too was eventually successful. St. James' was not a connectional A.M.E. Church until 1865, however, when, through Bishop Campbell, the Louisiana Conference, by the decree and order of the General Conference, was organized. Originally, it was established by charter, which was a custom in those days. The writer found that the Bethel A.M.E. Church at Vicksburg, Mississippi, had an independent charter. He had to have the trustees vote this charter null and void. Then he had the members vote to support the trustees and had it recorded.

The Formal Organization of the Louisiana Conference

After devotion and prayer by Bishop Campbell, with uplifted hands, he said, "In the name of the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, I, Jabez Pitt Campbell, one of the Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, do herewith organize the Louisiana Annual Conference according to the laws and usages, and also the decrees, of the General Conference of the aforesaid church." This was in November 1865.

The Louisiana Conference in the south central states, including Louisiana, Mississippi, a part of Texas, Alabama, and Arkansas, is today one of the leading Conferences of the A.M.E. Church. From it the Church has spread with firm hold into the cotton fields of Mississippi, the everglades of Texas and Arkansas, and the iron hills of Alabama. After that eventful day when the Louisiana Conference was or-

ganized, the following appointments were made by Bishop Campbell:

Charges	Pastors
St. James' A.M.E. Church, Louisian	John Turner
Natchez, Mississippi	J. Pinnington
Vicksburg, Mississippi	Thomas W. Stringer
Helena, Arkansas	L. F. Carter
Baton Rouge, Louisiana	R. Reedy
Mobile, Alabama	C. Burch
Little Rock, Arkansas	C. C. Doughty
Red River, Arkansas	Hanabal Augustus
Covington, Louisiana	Joseph Floyd
Thibfenville, Louisiana	James Reese
Galveston, Texas	Henry W. Jackson

St. James' Church was selected as the seat of the next Conference, and the Conference then adjourned *sine die.*

The Pioneers of the Louisiana Conference

Among the pastors who were active in organizing the Louisiana Conference were the Reverends Labouf, Webb, M. M. Martin, George W. Bryant, Jenkins, Hurley, Stonewall Jackson, A. M. Greene, J. W. Rankins, J. W. Wilson, Goings, and Harper.

The Second Line of "True Blues"

In this category were the Reverends J. W. Washington, S. J. Channel, Cox, Billops, Easom, C. E. Brooks, J. B. Bell, J. W. Lampton, Frank Lampton, Reese, Tison, Dr. Hill, E. Wittenberg, E.W. Williams, John Brown, Jerry Brown, B. R. Powe, Walker, F. G. Greene, P. W. Rogers, Tucker, E. W. Whitfield, J. E. Williams, J. C. Crowe, James Crowe, F. B. Hitchens, M. E. Black, R. E. Mims, Murrah, W. L. Debro, Cleveland Dixon, M. E. Johnson, Collins, Watson, N. L. Lumzy, Mabry, and Lucien.

Later "True Blues:" The Three Giants of a Later Day

The Reverend Dr. H. Thomas Primm, who built the Four Freedoms Building at Union Bethel, which stands as a monument to his vision.

O. A. Wilson, who wrought wonders in eight years at St. James', making a great church greater.

G. N. Collins, a colossal success.

Lampton College Merged with Campbell College, Jackson, Mississippi

Under the leadership of Bishop S. L. Greene, a merger was effected between J. P. Campbell College and Lampton College in 1933. This great accomplishment not only was of incalculable good for the A.M.E. Church in Mississippi and Louisiana, it was also of benefit for the Negro race. Neither institution could have survived alone. As a result of the merger, the states of Mississippi and Louisiana now have a vastly expanded Negro education program.

The Reverend Dr. P. W. Rogers, The Second General Officer Elected From Louisiana

Dr. A. M. Green was selected as editor of the *Southern Christian Recorder,* in 1893, by the publication board or the Bishops' Council. For lack of support however, Dr. Green resigned. The Reverend Dr. Taylor, while pastor of St. James', was elected as editor of the *Southern Christian Recorder.*

Dr. P. W. Rogers was elected secretary treasurer of the Church Extension Department in 1948. He was the second general officer elected from Louisiana. A graduate of Alcorn College, Mississippi, he has wrought well as a pastor, as one of the most successful presiding elders of the Louisiana Conference, and as a general officer. He established the

Church Insurance Department of the Church Extension Department. He has been faithful, congenial, and a good workman.

The Reverend Dr. W. L. Jones,
Editor of the Southwestern Recorder

Dr. W. L. Jones, the editor of the *Southwestern Recorder,* has also been very successful as a pastor in Mississippi at St. Matthew's, Greenville, and Friendship, Clarksdale, and as the Presiding Elder of Greater St. Matthew's at Shreveport, Louisiana.

He is a good writer, a great pastor, and his success under God is assured. Mrs. Jones, his wife, is a woman of great worth and capability.

Dr. M. R. Dixon, Jr., has followed in the steps of his illustrious father.

The stalwarts called the Louisiana "True Blues," are Drs. H. L. Lumzy, J. R. Powe, E. W. Whitfield, M. E. Johnson, Thomas Tucker, G. T. Stinson, G. H. J. Thibodoux, David J. Brown, W. L. Debro, J. E. Williams, Black, Murray, Cleveland Dixon, Terry, L. L. Lucien, F. B. Hitchens, Pitts, C. E. Young, and E. W. Turner.

Dr. John Jackson, the senior Presiding Elder of Louisiana in the A.M.E. ranks is a successful pastor and one of the most dependable ministers in the A.M.E. Connection.

The Successful Builders

The Reverend Dr. H. Thomas Primm, now Bishop Primm, wrote his name indelibly in the records of Union Bethel A.M.E. Church, New Orleans, during his leadership there. His dream came true in the erection of the S. L. Greene Four Freedoms Building, the most ambitious undertaking of its kind in the entire A.M.E. Connection.

The Reverend Dr. O. A. Wilson, while pastor of St.

James' A.M.E. Church, New Orleans, was instrumental in promoting the construction of the great center for youth and A.M.E. auxiliaries.

The Reverend E. W. Williams, while at Union Bethel, persevered for many years until the great auditorium was completed. He is gone but will never be forgotten.

The Reverend Black is remembered for the construction of St. John's, Algiers, New Orleans.

The Reverend W. L. Debro has written his name on the cornerstones of three or more church buildings in Louisiana, and he is still full of enterprise.

The youthful Reverend David J. Brown stands in a class by himself as a master building in Shreveport, Louisiana.

The Reverend Cleveland Dixon, with only a small congregation at Oak Grove, Louisiana, has managed to do a fifty-thousand-dollar job. New Bethel, recently finished despite many odds, is a thing of beauty, and will reflect credit upon the Reverend Dixon for many generations.

The Reverend Terry has brought Binita to the fore. For years the congregation hoped a pastor who would do things would take over. Now, under the leadership of the young Reverend Terry, many of the needed things have been done.

The A.M.E. Church at Tallulah has the illustrious Reverend E. Pullins, former pastor at that place, to thank for much that has been done there. Though dead, his work speaketh. True as steel and with a firm determination, he will always be remembered for his work at Tallulah and other places. Peace to his ashes and tranquility to his soul.

The late Reverend B. J. Jackson's name also should be among the immortals for the work he accomplished in recovering the Greater St. Matthew's Church for the A.M.E. Connection. It was a job that even angels might have found difficult. But through sacrifice, struggle, and constant walking with God, working night and day despite jeers and criticism, he did what few men could have done. He breathed his last just a few years ago. He often complimented this

writer for having the courage to make public the record of his achievement in the press. He was a fine preacher, scholar, and brother.

The Louisiana Conference has been given jurisdiction over many districts by the Episcopal committees from many General Conferences of the A. M. E. Church, among them Mississippi, Texas, Alabama, and others. It now represents the Eighth Episcopal District.

Bishops Campbell, Shorter, Ward, Cain, Waymond, Grant, Lee, Turner, Lampton, Salter, Armstrong, Heard, Connor, Johnson, Gains, Davis, Gibbs, and now Bishop Primm, have been some of its leaders.

The Louisiana-Mississippi Fellowship is a Godsend, and with Christian cooperation its future is a bright one for African Methodism. Louisiana has the mineral wealth and Mississippi has the soil, as well as large numbers of our kith and kin. When we learn how to consecrate the ten per cent of our earnings to God and his cause, and use discretion in handling our affairs, there is no field of the A.M.E. Church that has greater potentialities.

PART III

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF J. P. CAMPBELL COLLEGE OF THE A.M.E. CHURCH, JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

Inspired by Bishop Daniel A. Payne, Bishop James A. Shorter, and other pioneer ministers and laymen, it was moved in the Conference of Mississippi that an institution be established for the religious, intellectual, and industrial development of Negro youth. On January 14, 1890, Campbell College was organized in Bethel A.M.E. Church, in Vicksburg.

Bishop Benjamin W. Arnette was then the Presiding Bishop of the Eighth Episcopal District, which comprised Mississippi and Arkansas. Professor B. W. Arnette, Jr., was elected President, but owing to the death of Bishop Payne, the Presiding Bishop of the Third Episcopal District, Bishop Arnette was also given the supervision of that district. That caused Professor Arnette to leave the presidency vacant. It was later filled by the Reverend Dr. W. T. Anderson, pastor of Bethel A.M.E. Church, Vicksburg, who was succeeded by I. T. Montgomery.

The Founders of Campbell College

The founders of Campbell College included the following ministers: the Reverends Thomas W. Stringer, M.D., E. R., Carter, L. M. Mitchell, J. G. Johnson, and J. W. Watson, the last four also being Presiding Elders; the following pastors: the Reverends W. T. Anderson, of Bethel

Church, Vicksburg, and W. H. Coleman, of Zion Chapel, Natchez; and the following laymen: Professor W. H. Reynolds, president of Alcorn College; the Honorable I. T. Montgomery, founder of Mound Bayou, Mississippi; Thomas Richardson, postmaster at Port Gibson, Mississippi; H. T. Richer, of Greenville; W. H. Allen, of Friars Point, Mississippi; and L. W. W. Mannaway, Jackson, Mississippi.

These are the men who with Bishop B. W. Arnette laid the foundation of Campbell College.

Why It Was Named Campbell College

Bishop Jabez Pitt Campbell organized the Louisiana Conference in 1865. The Conference then included Louisiana, and parts of Texas, Mississippi, and Arkansas. Later in 1874, Bishop Campbell organized the North Mississippi Conference. Therefore the college was named in his honor. He was very proud to be thus honored, and when he was on his deathbed he made a substantial contribution for the maintenance of the institution.

First Located at Vicksburg

Twenty-eight acres of land for the college were acquired from Mrs. Bigsby through the influence of the Reverend Dr. W. T. Anderson, but the notes went by default when Dr. Anderson transferred to Ohio. However, the college's program continued for several years in Bethel Hall, a splendid biulding with excellent facilities, located in the rear of Bethel Church in Vicksburg. Professor A. S. Barus was the principal.

Stringer Academy at Friar's Point, Mississippi, Ward's Academy at Natchez, Mississippi, and Disney Academy at Greenville, Mississippi were embryonic efforts toward the greater Campbell College. These were unorganized educational movements. Campbell College, however, was the way out on a large scale.

The First Authentic Report About Campbell College

The first report about Campbell College is dated from Vicksburg, Mississippi, December 10, 1891. It reads as follows:

"To the Bishop and ministers in Conference assembled here in Meridian, Mississippi. Dear Brethren, as president of Campbell College, domiciled at Vicksburg, Mississippi. I have the honor of reporting that the first session of the institution of four months opened on the first Monday in February in 1890. During the term, the enrollment was fifty students and the collections from tuition was $77.000. Received from Bishop J. P. Campbell, $100.000. From the students from Alcorn College, $11.00 including the faculty. From the North Mississippi Conference $250.00, subscription and cash, total of $1825.00. The first payment of teachers' salary is paid with a scale of a maximum of $55.00 and a minimum of $25.00. The first payment on the land, 28 acres, bargained for $153.00 leaving a balance of $843.00. Through the influence of the Honorable I. T. Montgomery, James Hill, Dr. W. T. Stringer, T. H. Allen, W. T. Anderson, E. W. Lampton, Mr. C. P. Huntington, president of the L.O.N.T. Railroad Company, has granted Campbell one thousand acres of land, two and one half miles from Mound Bayou, Mississippi, for the education of Negro youth."

This land is still intact, less four hundred acres lopped off for debts incurred during the depression of 1921-29.

The authenticity of the above may be verified by documents at Cleveland, Mississippi, in the record of Bolivar County.

It must be remembered, however, that this land was mostly swamp land, so that it took years to make it usable for tilling and other purposes. Many people have believed that this land was a gold mine, and that all that had to be done was to dig in the earth to get the pots of gold.

Removal of College From Vicksburg to Jackson

In 1897, Bishop W. B. Derrick, the supervising Bishop of the Eighth Episcopal District, Arkansas and Mississippi, persuaded the trustees of Campbell College to move the institution from Vicksburg to Jackson, Mississippi, since Jackson was in the center of the state. Four acres of land, the plot upon which Campbell College now stands, was purchased on Lynch Street. Since then, four or five acres have been added to the original plot.

The Reverend Dr. Monrose W. Thornton, now Presiding Elder of the Nashville District, was elected the first president of Campbell College at Jackson. After two years, he was transferred to the First Episcopal District, and Perry W. Howard, now National Committeeman of the Republican Party from Mississippi, acted as principal until the appointment of Bishop Evans Tyree.

The first building, a two-story frame structure, was erected during the administration of Bishop Derrick, in 1870. This was destroyed by fire in 1901. Bishop Evans Tyree succeeded Bishop Derrick in 1900. During his administration, Ellen Tyree Hall, a girls' dormitory, was built at a cost of ten thousand dollars. Dr. Butler served as president throughout Bishop Tyree's entire administration. He was succeeded by the Reverend H. H. Buckingham.

Money was not plentiful, but there was enough interest in the college among the people to maintain it, and the student body increased between 1904 and 1908. Bishop M. B. Salters was then in office. Salters Hall, the boys' dormitory, which was named for him, was erected in 1907 at a cost of nine hundred dollars. This was during the presidency of H. H. Buckingham. Bishop Salters was a high churchman and Campbell College fared well during his administration.

Bishop Lampton was the first bishop to be elected who came from Mississippi. He was born in Kentucky, but he

was an adopted son of Mississippi. His whole heart was in the success of Campbell College, and he used all his energy and all the resources of the church in Mississippi to push forward the educational work.

The Reverend Dr. M. M. Ponton was elected president before he came to the district. He was recommended by Bishop Lampton. Dr. Ponton infused the college with new life. The student enrollment soon numbered over four hundred, and the facilities were so overtaxed that there was scarcely room to accommodate the students.

Lampton Seminary Organized

About this time, Lampton Seminary was organized. Some of the ablest young ministers were the products of this seminary at Campbell College. A thorough Bible course was inaugurated, and all students had to matriculate in Bible studies. Dean Jordan and Dean McKnight served as heads of the department at that time, and many young ministers were trained by them in the basic fundamentals of Christianity. The administration of Bishop Lampton came to its end with his death, early in 1910.

This writer drew up a resolution, which was signed by three hundred ministers, praying the Council of Bishops to authorize Bishop Turner, who had retired, to supervise the Eighth District. The prayer was granted, and Bishop Turner carried out the last two years of Dr. Lampton's administration.

Bishop Connor's Administration

Bishop Connor's administration was stormy at times, but he was a great schoolman, though self-taught. He had the common touch and easily solicited cooperation from men and women in all walks of life. Lawyers and doctors used

Campbell College as a common forum at the Annual Trustee Board meeting, and the young ministers were awakened as never before.

The Awful Calamity That Befell Campbell College

Bishop William Decker Johnson was the supervising bishop from 1928 to 1932. His administration began favorably, both at Campbell College and the Church in general. His son William was made president of the college. After two years, however, the effects of the depression caught up with Campbell. The situation went from bad to worse, until one afternoon, late in the spring, the entire property was sold under the sheriff's hammer for the mortgage of fifteen thousand dollars.

An attempt was made to change the seat of Campbell College to Mound Bayou, Mississippi, but it failed, and the main educational facility of the A.M.E. Church collapsed. Thousands of dollars were spent in a futile attempt to salvage the college, but to no avail.

When Bishop Sherman Lawrence Greene began his administration, in 1932, his first move was to revive Campbell College and to merge it with Lampton College at Alexandria. This was masterfully accomplished, for both were dead and buried. His next move was to lift the fifteen-thousand-dollar mortgage from Campbell. Terms were agreed upon for the repair of the walls and the old building just as Nehemiah did at Jerusalem of old. The old "true blues" came to Bishop Greene's support, and in less than eight years Campbell was resurrected from the grave of oblivion.

The one thousand acres of land that had been in the hands of the receivers were regained after several years of court procedures, less four hundred acres which were lost in the shuffle.

The physical plant at Campbell College was repaired from bottom to top, and new buildings added, including the new Administration Building named for Bishop S. L. Greene,

and an auditorium seating eight hundred persons. A veteran's department was built and equipped at a cost of twenty thousand dollars. The student body increased from fifty to approximately five hundred. The Reverend Dr. R. A. Scott was the first president of Campbell after it was revived. He was followed by Thibodeaux, S. L. Greene, Jr., and then by H. P. Wilburn. After Bishop Greene's administration, Bishop Davis took the reins in hand. He was succeeded by Bishop H. Thomas Primm who is still the presiding bishop.

The Mound Bayou Farming Project a Reality

It takes time, money, and skill to do a big job. About twenty years ago, the A.M.E. Church received enough land at Mound Bayou for a farming project, but until recently it was unable to do anything about it. Under the direction of Bishop H. M. Davis, the Church finally was able to realize what had been only a dream for so long. The farm now has all the necessary equipment, and with a little time, patience, tact, and good sense it should be able to give Campbell College an annuity of a permanent endowment of fifteen thousand dollars. Believe it or not, this can be done with the groundwork that has already been laid.

The Heroes of The Hour

These are the men who are dependable, strong, and mighty. They know no Alps. They beat no retreat. They pass through the hottest fire, but will not be consumed. No obstacles discourage them. They have been plunged into confusion and suffered heavy reverses but they have always won in the end.

The Old Guard

In this category, the writer wishes to place the Reverends C. S. Jones, J. W. Hair, W. M. E. Barnes, B. J. Jackson, F. C.

Durden, W. M. Holmes, S. C. Scrivens, Charles Stephen, J. W. Watkins, L. A. Clark, James Thornton, T. S. J. Pendleton, R. C. Perry, G. A. A. Jones, H. P. Andrews, A. T. Ward, Robert Stevens, and William Portis. They are all great, but there are so many more — Rogers, Whitfield, Tucker, Thibodeaux, Mims, Jackson, Mabry, Jones, Haughton, Black, and Lumzy. And not forgetting the laymen — Jefferson, Percy, Hampton, Gilliam, Toler, Green, Ford, Logan, and so many others. Good African Methodists all!

Additional Notes on Campbell College Under Various Administrations

When Bishop William B. Derrick (1896-1900) suggested that the college be moved from Vicksburg, its original location, to Jackson, he met with some opposition, although the move was eventually made. He contended that Jackson, being in the center of the state, was a more convenient location. His foresight is evident today, for not only is Jackson the metropolitan center of the state, it is also the state's railroad center, and easily approached from all other sections.

* * * * *

Bishop William H. Heard was a great administrator but he disliked to be bothered with minor details, which he left to trusted associates. Campbell College had its golden season during his administration; for the first time in its history it became free of debt. However, a progressive institution is never free from obligations if it wishes to keep on being progressive. So the feeling of being "free at last" led to a slackening of effort, and eventually a setback in the educational program, from which it took some time to recover.

* * * * *

Bishop H. M. Davis (1948-52) made an energetic start and remarkable progress in bringing to fruition the long-wished-for improvement of the Mound Bayou farm project at

a cost of $20,000. Unfortunately, before it was finally completed he suffered a stroke that handicapped him in personally supervising the work and that eventually led to his death.

* * * * *

When Bishop Lampton was near death, he telephoned this writer at Vicksburg to offer a resolution to the Council of Bishops praying that they might allow Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, who had retired, to take over the supervision of the Eighth Episcopal District. Bishops Parks and Heard opposed the resolution, but Bishop B. F. Lee, then the senior bishop, and Bishop Flipper favored it.

Speaking in defense of the resolution, the Reverend Dr. W. M. Singleton said to Bishop Heard, "Brother Heard, you can't hold an official board in America." Bishop Heard did not reply, but six years later, when he was the presiding bishop of the Eighth Episcopal District, he still had not forgotten what the Reverend Singleton had said, for, when the Reverend Singleton passed, he sent the Reverend Dr. A. L. Murrah to give the eulogy for him in his stead, which included these words: "The Reverend Singleton was a wonderful man, but . . ."

* * * * *

In 1918, Professor H. N. McGhee, then president of Campbell College, was verbally charged with insubordination and publicly reprimanded by Bishop William Wesley Beckett, of sacred memory. Since the writer believes that every accused man has the right to have an attorney to present his defense, he served as Professor McGhee's counsel. My Conference, the Central Mississippi Conference, convened at Vicksburg, and the other Conferences in the state attempted to destroy my status as leader of my Conference. This was a political move; not done out of hatred for me. But when the smoke of battle had cleared, I was elected unanimously. The entire affair was poor politics on my part, but I abhor malevolence, tyranny, and autocracy.

Just eleven months after this incident, the good Bishop

reviewed the case and confessed his mistake. Soon after, I was appointed Dean of the E. W. Lampton School of Religion at Campbell College, a position I still hold. I still believe that when a man is a coward where a moral issue is involved, he is fit only to be a quarry slave. Professor McGhee lost out as president of Campbell College, but his crown of honor is still unsullied in the field of Christian education.

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